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SC bans caste discrimination in jails

SC quashes jail manual rules of 10 states including K'taka as they foster unconstitutional biases

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday banned caste-based discrimination such as division of manual labour, segregation of barracks and bias against prisoners of de-notified tribes and habitual offenders. The court held the jail manual rules of 10 states as "unconstitutional" for fostering such biases.

Observing that "right to live with dignity extends even to the incarcerated", a bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said, "Criminal laws of the colonial era continue to impact the postcolonial world."

It asked the Centre and the states to amend their prison manuals and laws within three months, and file compliance reports. The states in question are Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh.

It said Article 17 enunciates that everyone is born equal.

Supreme Court **PHOTO: PTI**

For instance, rules stating "sweepers shall be chosen from the "Mehtar or Hari caste", is discrimination.

Penning the 148-page judgment on a PIL of journalist Sukanya Shantha, the CJI ordered deletion of the 'caste' column and any references to caste of jailed undertrials or convicted prisoners' registers in prisons. The CJI said dignity of human existence is fully realised only when one leads a quality life. The verdict directed the district legal services authorities (DLSAs) and the Board of Visitors formed under the Model Prison Manual to inspect whether caste-based discrimination are still taking place in prisons. *—PTI*

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Highlights of the judgment

- **SC declares impugned provisions unconstitutional for violating Articles 14 (equality), 15 (prohibition of discrimination), 17 (abolition of untouchability), 21 (right to life and personal liberty) and 23 (right against forced labour).**
- **SC directs all states and UTs to revise Prison Manuals/Rules within 3 months.**
- **SC says "caste" column and any references to caste in jailed prisoners' registers must be deleted.**
- **SC takes suo motu cognisance of discrimination in prisons on grounds of caste, gender, disability.**

Govt opposes marital rape criminalisation

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

INew Delhi, 3 Oct

If sexual acts by a man with his own wife is made punishable as "rape", it may severely impact the conjugal relationship and lead to serious disturbances in the institution of marriage, the Centre has told the Supreme Court.

Opposing the criminalisation of marital rape, which is sought by many petitioners before the apex court, the Centre has filed its preliminary counter affidavit in the top court.

Under the now-repealed IPC, Section 375 exempted a man from being charged with rape if the victim was his wife and she was not a minor. The BNS, which came into effect in July 2023, retains this exemption, now under Section 63.

The Centre said in the fast growing and ever changing social and family structure, misuse of the amended provisions can also not be ruled out as it would be difficult and challenging for a person to prove whether consent was there or not.

It said the issue involved in the matter is more of a social issue rather than a legal issue.

"The central government asserts that a woman's consent is not obliterated by marriage and its violation should result in penal consequences. However, the consequences of such violations within marriage differ from those outside it," the affidavit said.

The top court on 16 January, 2023 sought the Centre's response on a clutch of petitions assailing the IPC provision, which provides protection to a husband against prosecution for forcible sexual intercourse if the wife is an adult.

Later, it also issued a notice to the Centre on a similar plea challenging the BNS provision on the issue. *—PTI*

JUST MEETING, NO ACTION: SC RAPS POLLUTION BODY

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The Supreme Court on Thursday slammed the Commission for Air Quality Management for failing to control incidents of stubble burning in NCR and adjoining areas, and said it has made no effort to implement its direction to prevent such incidents.

It said the Commission only kept on calling meetings but did not take penal action against the violators. There was no implementation of directions to stop stubble burning and the state governments of Punjab and Haryana have done nothing except recovering nominal compensation from the farmers, the court added.

It observed that only five out of 11 members attended the body's meeting convened on 29 August to discuss air pollution in Delhi and the apex court's directions were "not even discussed". *—PTI*

Poll campaign ends in Haryana

CHANDIGARH, 3 OCT

The high-octane campaign in Haryana for the 5 October Assembly polls came to an end Thursday evening as the BJP hopes to buck anti-incumbency to retain power for a third consecutive term and the Congress eyes a comeback after a decade-long hiatus. In an interesting development, senior BJP leader and former MP Ashok Tanwar joined Congress at Rahul Gandhi's rally in Mahendragarh district Thursday. Shortly before joining Congress, the former Sirsa MP was campaigning for the BJP candidate in Safidon Assembly constituency. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Marathi, Bengali are now classical languages

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved conferring the status of classical language to Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese and Bengali languages. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Government of India decided to create a new category of languages as "classical languages" on 12 October, 2004 declaring Tamil as classical language and thereafter Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Odia languages were given classical language status . Assembly elections are due later this year in Maharashtra and this was a major poll issue. *—PTI*

Complainant accuses CM of destroying proof

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

Pradeep Kumar SP, one of the complainants in the MUDA case, on Thursday alleged that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and others were trying to destroy the evidence in the 'scam' and requested Enforcement Directorate to initiate action against them.

ED registered an Enforcement Case Information Report, equivalent to an FIR by police, against the Chief Minister over the alleged irregularities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife by the MUDA (Mysuru Urban Development Authority). MUDA on Tuesday decided to take back the 14 plots allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife, following her decision to relinquish their ownership and possession.

In a letter to ED, Kumar maintained that the status of the property cannot be disturbed without the court's permission. "I respectfully submit that the accused should be arrested immediately, failing which, the entire case evidence may be destroyed," he said in his letter. "Lodge a complaint against the Chief Minister and others for destruction of evidence etc." He said the proceeds of crime generated by the commission of the scheduled offences during the pendency of investigation is to be maintained and retained in the manner they were at the time of registration of ECIR.

This would enable the authorities to continue the investigation and take such steps as required and provided under the Act, Kumar said. *—PTI*

KUMARASWAMY BOOKED FOR EXTORTION

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

A case has been registered against Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy on charges of extortion and criminal intimidation following a complaint by a realtor here, police said on Thursday. Along with Kumaraswamy, who holds Steel and Heavy Industries portfolio, former MLC of the JD(S) Ramesh Gowda was also booked by the Amruthahalli police in the case. Vijay Tata, the complainant, alleged that he was the JD(S) social media vice president but had distanced himself from the party as he was focusing on his real estate business.

However, on 24 August 24, Gowda came home and called Kumaraswamy from his phone. The Minister told him that the party needed Rs 50 crore for the Channapatna byelections as it has decided to field his son Nikhil Kumaraswamy this time, Tata alleged.

The realtor also claimed that when he expressed his inability to pay, Kumaraswamy allegedly threatened him with dire consequences. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

1,974 KILLED TILL NOW

Israel bombards Lebanon

BEIRUT, 3 OCT

An Israeli airstrike on an apartment in central Beirut killed nine Hezbollah-affiliated civilian first responders.

The Lebanese Army returned Israeli fire for the first time in nearly a year of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah. Israel has been pounding areas of the country where the militant group has a strong presence since late September, but has rarely struck in the heart of the capital.

There was no warning before the strike late Wednesday, which hit an apartment in central Beirut not far from the United Nations headquarters, the prime minister's office and parliament. Hezbollah's civil defence unit said seven of its members were killed.

The Lebanese Red Cross, said an Israeli strike wounded four of its paramedics and killed a Lebanese army soldier as they were evacuating wounded people from the south. It said the convoy near the village of Taybeh, which was accompanied by Lebanese troops, was targeted Thursday despite coordinating its movements with UN peacekeepers.

Over the past 24 hours, Lebanon has suffered at least 46 deaths due to air raids.

Lebanese Health Ministry said Israeli strikes hit health facilities, violating international war laws **PHOTO: PTI**

Residents reported a sulfur-like smell following strike in Beirut, and Lebanon's state-run National News Agency accused Israel of using phosphorous bombs, without providing evidence. Human rights groups have accused Israel of using white phosphorus incendiary shells on towns and villages in southern Lebanon.

Lebanese Health Ministry Firas Abiad says Israeli strikes that hit health facilities and workers are in "violation of international law and treaties." Meanwhile, Houthi rebels in Yemen said they had launched two drones at Tel Aviv overnight. The military said it identified two drones off the coast of the bustling metropolitan area, shooting one of them down while the other fell in the Mediterranean Sea. Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden says he doesn't expect Israel to retaliate immediately against Iran. Lebanese health minister announced that the death toll from Israeli attacks has risen to 1,974, with another 9,384 injured since 8 October of last year. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3, 6 and 7

MOB STORMS POLICE STN, LOOTS ARMS IN MANIPUR

IMPHAL, 3 OCT

A mob stormed a police station in Manipur's Ukhrul town and looted arms during a clash between two groups, officials said on Thursday.

Three people were killed and 20 others injured in a gunfight that broke out between two groups on Wednesday over cleaning a disputed land in the town as part of 'Swachhata Abhiyan'. Prohibitory orders were imposed and mobile internet services were suspended in the town after the clash between two groups of the Naga community.

"After violence broke out in Ukhrul town, a mob comprising mostly of youths stormed the police station located at Wino Bazar and decamped with government weapons," an official said. The number and types of weapons looted cannot be immediately confirmed as an investigation is continuing, he added.

Unofficial sources, however, claimed that the looted weapons included AK-47 and INSAS rifles. This is the first time a police station was stormed in a Naga-majority area, according to a source. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Savarkar was OK with cow slaughter: Dinesh Gundu Rao

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

Following Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao's statement on Veer Savarkar's ideology and claims of him "consuming beef" despite being a Chitpavan Brahmin, Savarkar's grandson, as well as Bharatiya Janata Party leaders, came down heavily at Rao and Congress on Thursday. Rao on Wednesday claimed that Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar used to eat meat and was not against cow slaughter. "Savarkar, a 'Chitpavan Brahmin', used to eat meat. He was a non-veg eater and he was not against cow slaughter. He was modern in a way," he said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

> **I will file a defamation case against Gundu Rao for making false charges that VD Savarkar used to consume beef** -Ranjit Savarkar, Veer Savarkar's grand son

Cabinet approves 78-day bonus for railway employees

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved payment of productivity linked bonus of 78 days for Rs 2028.57 crore to over 11.72 lakh railway employees, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said. The amount will be paid to various categories of Railway staff like track maintainers, loco pilots, train managers (guards), station masters, supervisors, technicians, technician helpers, pointsman, ministerial staff and other Group XC staff, an official statement said later. The payment of productivity linked bonus acts as an incentive to motivate the railway employees for working towards improvement in the performance of the Railways. *—PTI*

10-DAY CELEBRATION

Grand Dasara festivities begin in Mysuru

MYSURU, 3 OCT

The famous 10-day Dasara celebrations commenced in Mysuru Palace on Thursday amid religious and traditional fervour, with writer and scholar Hampa Nagarajaiah inaugurating the festivities.

Nagarajaiah inaugurated the festivities during the auspicious "Vrushchika Lagna" by showering flowers on the idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari, the presiding deity of Mysuru and its royals, amid chanting of Vedic hymns, on the premises of Chamundeshwari temple atop the Chamundi Hills here.

The 10-day event, like every year, is likely to showcase Karnataka's cultural heritage resplendent with folk art forms; it attracts large crowds and tourists, officials have said. Programmes will be held during these auspicious days of Navrathri, during which the palace, major streets, turnarounds or circles and buildings of Mysuru will be beautified by illuminating them with lights, fondly known as "Deepalankaara". Nearly 6,500 artists, including those from 508 troupes from across the State, will be performing in cultural events during the Dasara this year at about 11 different platforms. Also, dozens of events that attract people, like food mela, flower shows, cultural programmes, farmers' Dasara, women's Dasara, Yuva Dasara, children's Dasara, and poetry recitals are also conducted. However, cultural events in front of the illuminated Ambavilasa Palace will be the main attraction, as it will be the main venue for performances by acclaimed artists. *—PTI*

CM Siddaramaiah with writer Hampa Nagarajaiah and others offer prayers during the inauguration of Dasara in Chamundeshwari temple atop Chamundi Hills, in Mysuru, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Govt rolls out scheme to provide 1 cr internships in 5 years

Centre on Thursday rolled out an internship programme that will provide financial assistance for five years. The scheme covering 500 top firms will also provide insurance coverage to the interns. Here is all you need to know about it:

- 1 crore youth to get ₹60,000 per annum.
- The interns will be provided ₹5,000 per month (₹4,500 from govt and ₹500 from company).
- Interns will get ₹6,000 upon joining the internship.
- Age: 21 to 24 years.
- Project cost: ₹800 crore.
- 1.25L candidates to get internship in next 12 months.
- Candidates can register through Corporate Affairs Ministry portal from 2nd week of Oct.
- Internship will start from 2 Dec.
- Internship duration is for 12 months.
- Candidates who have passed High School, Higher Secondary School, possess a certificate from an ITI, hold a diploma from a Polytechnic Institute, or are graduates with degrees such as BA, BSc, BCom, BCA, BBA, BPharma are eligible.

Traffic curbs imposed at Marathahalli

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

In an effort to decongest the busy Marathahalli Bridge junction on Varthur Road, Bengaluru Traffic Police have announced new traffic restrictions. The restrictions in HAL Airport Traffic police station limits will be in effect daily during peak hours from 7am to 11am and from 4pm to 10pm. Vehicular movement has been restricted on Outer Ring Road from KLM Service Road towards Kundalahalli Gate during these hours. Light vehicles can take a 'U' turn near Akash Vihar Housing and proceed via Marathahalli Bridge to reach Kundalahalli Gate. Heavy vehicles are directed to take a 'U' turn at Tulsi Theater Junction. *—Salar News*

BEL, Israel Aerospace firm form joint venture

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

Navratna defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Israel's leading aerospace and defence company, have announced the establishment of a joint venture company, which has been incorporated in the name of BEL IAI AeroSystems Private Ltd. The JVC with its registered office in Delhi shall be the single point of contact (SPOC) for extending long-term product support to the Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) systems of India's defence forces, Bengaluru-headquartered BEL said on Thursday. BEL said the JVC has been set up to provide life cycle support, both technical and maintenance related, for MRSAM air-defence systems of the country. MRSAM provides protection against a variety of aerial threats. *—PTI*

BESCOM services to be unavailable from 4 to 7 Oct

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

Services of Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) such as online and offline bill payments, mobile applications and consumer portal will be unavailable from 9pm on Friday to 6am on Monday due to upgrading its IT infrastructure. BESCOM is upgrading its Restructured Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme (RAPDRP) IT applications as part of Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS) Phase-2, according to a statement. RAPDRP applications used by BESCOM officials for routine operations will be offline. This upgrade is part of BESCOM's efforts to enhance its IT infrastructure and improve service delivery in its operational areas. BESCOM completed the Phase-1 upgradation earlier this year, updating its Oracle CCB system from version 2.3 to 2.8. In the upcoming Phase-2, BESCOM will roll out improvements for applications related to Estimates, GIS, EAM, IDAM, EAS, and Master Data Management, with the upgraded applications set to go live on Monday. *—Salar News*

Film city in Mysuru will be ready by 2027, says CM

MYSURU, 3 OCT

The proposed film city across 160 acres at Himmavu village in Nanjangud taluk in Mysuru district will be ready by 2027, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Thursday.State government in 2014 had allotted 110 acres for the film city and now it has allotted 50 more acres for it, Siddaramaiah after inaugurating Dasara film festival 2024 at KSOU Convocation Hall in the city. The film fest will be held between 4 and 10 October in which award-winning movies will be screened at theatres in the City.The Chief Minister said his government is celebrating this year's film festival in memory of late Dwarakish remembering his contributions to the growth of the Sandalwood industry. *—Salar News*

'Crores of rupees involved in MUDA case'

Petitioner Snehamayi Krishna appears before ED in Bengaluru, submits proof and documents

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

Activist Snehamayi Krishna, a petitioner in the alleged MUDA scam who appeared before Enforcement Directorate (ED) in Bengaluru on Thursday, said there are thousands of crores of rupees involved in the MUDA case.

ED summoned him, asking him to produce all the documents and records pertaining to the alleged MUDA scam. This is regarding his email complaint to the ED against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Krishna said, "I came to appear before ED officers with some required documents like PAN card, Aadhaar card and others related to my family and my income background. I have given documents related to my complaint. Siddaramaiah's issue has been taken as one of the examples. There are thousands of crores of rupees involved in the MUDA case. That's why I have asked for a thorough enquiry."

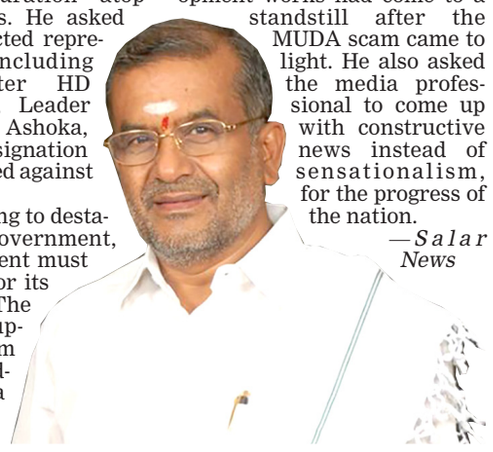
Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy has accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of systematic attempts to destroy evidence and cover up the MUDA scam. He insisted that the MUDA commissioner, who took back the plots from CM's wife, should be arrested immediately for violating court orders. *—ANI*

No need for Siddaramaiah to resign, says JD(S) leader

MYSURU, 3 OCT

State JD(S) Core Committee President and MLA **GT Devegowda** on Thursday said that there is no need for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to tender resignation over MUDA 'scam'.

Neither High Court nor Governor directed the Chief Minister to tender resignation and there is no provision in the law to tender resignation once an FIR is filed, Devegowda said after attending Dasara festival inauguration atop Chamundi Hills. He asked will all the elected representatives, including Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, submit their resignation as FIRs were filed against them.



Instead of trying to destabilise State government, Union government must help the State for its development. The unexpected support from Opposition leader Devegowda surprised the participants of the Dasara inaugural, including Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, ministers HC Mahadevappa, K Venkatesh, HK Patil and Shivaraj Tangadagi and CESC Chairman Ramesh Bandisiddegowda. In his speech, Siddaramaiah thanked Devegowda, who was his confidant in politics for 23 years.

The former minister expressed his displeasure on the current political mudslinging in the State and said development works had come to a standstill after the MUDA scam came to light. He also asked the media professional to come up with constructive news instead of sensationalism, for the progress of the nation. *—Salar News*

ELECTED GOVTS SHOULDN'T BE TOPPLED: WRITER

MYSURU, 3 OCT

Renowned Kannada writer and scholar Hampa Nagarajaiah on Thursday said it has become impossible for any government to complete its term as he decried attempts by Opposition parties to topple elected regimes during their stint in power.

Delivering his inaugural address at the opening of the 10-day Dasara celebrations atop the Chamundi Hills here, he said parties that lost elections should wait for the next election to have a shot at power after winning the confidence of people.

"I pray to the goddess on behalf of the people of the State to fulfil my few wishes," he said. "I pray to the goddess that may the malice to topple the government end and may the thinking for saving and protecting the elected governments prevail. Destroying is easy, but building is difficult. May the common man who is already distressed, not be put under the pressure of repeated elections." *—Salar News with Agencies*

CM: Have faith in judiciary, truth will always triumph

MYSURU, 3 OCT

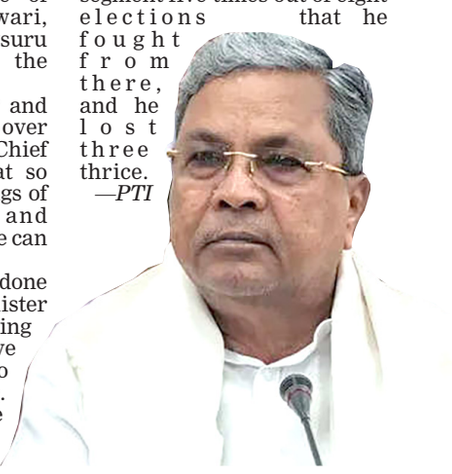
Chief Minister **Siddaramaiah**, facing probe into the MUDA 'scam' case, on Thursday asserted that he is conducting himself in accordance with his conscience and confident that truth would prevail as he once again rejected Opposition calls for his scalp.

"Satyameva Jayate," he declared as he spoke at the inaugural ceremony of the 10-day Dasara celebrations on the premises of temple of Goddess Chamundeshwari, the presiding deity of Mysuru and its royals, atop the Chamundi Hills here.

Amid demands by BJP and JD(S) for his resignation over the MUDA 'scam', the Chief Minister emphasised that so long as he has the blessings of the people and Chamundeshwari, "no one can do anything."

Reiterating that he has done no wrong, the Chief Minister said had he done anything wrong, it would not have been possible for him to stay in politics for so long. "Earlier too I had been the Chief Minister for five years, probably in Karnataka's history after Devaraj Urs, if there is any Chief Minister who has completed five years term, it is only Siddaramaiah," said Siddaramaiah, who had served as Chief Minister from 2013 to 2018.

Even now despite all obstacles and difficulties, he has the blessings of mother goddess Chamundeshwari, the Chief Minister said. Siddaramaiah noted that he has won from Chamundeshwari Assembly segment five times out of eight elections that he fought from there, and he lost three thrice. *—PTI*



Savarkar used to eat meat, was not against cow slaughter: Rao

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

Following Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao's statement on Veer Savarkar's ideology and claims of him "consuming beef" despite being a Chitpavan Brahmin, Savarkar's grandson, as well as Bharatiya Janata Party leaders, came down heavily at Rao and Congress on Thursday.

Rao on Wednesday claimed that Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar used to eat meat and was not against cow slaughter. "Savarkar, a 'Chitpavan Brahmin', used to eat meat. He was a non-veg eater and he was not against cow slaughter. He was modern in a way," he said at an event here. "Some say that he used to eat beef as well. As a Brahmin, he used to eat meat and was openly propagating eating meat. So he had that thinking," the minister said.

Dinesh Gundu Rao ***PHOTO: PTI***

Rao added that Mahatma Gandhi was a vegetarian and had a firm faith in Hinduism "but his actions were different.

He was a democratic person. (Founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali) Jinnah was another extreme. He was a hardcore Islamist believer. He used to drink wine and it is said he used to eat pork as well but he became a Muslim icon after the two-nation theory and politics. But Jinnah was not a fundamentalist but Savarkar was a fundamentalist," he said.

On Thursday, explaining the context in which he made the comments, the minister said there was a discussion on Mahatma Gandhi's assassination in a book release event where he had a 'very healthy discussion'.

Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis said people in Congress don't know anything about Savarkar and only insult him. BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi also slammed the Health Minister for his statement and said "such knowledge" proves that people had lost their "mental balance" and that they should go to a "mental institution" to get better.

Karnataka Leader of Opposition R Ashoka questioned why Congress always threaten Hindus and not Muslims. Ashoka said in the future the Hindu people would teach the Congress a lesson. *—Agencies*

WATERY RIDE

A stretch of MG Road near M Chinnaswamy Stadium was waterlogged after rain lashed Bengaluru on Thursday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Three more suspected Pakistani nationals held

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

Three suspected Pakistani nationals have been taken into custody in Peenya on Thursday, police sources said.

This comes close on the heels of four people being arrested at Jigani on Bengaluru outskirts a few days ago. These three people are husband, wife and their daughter.

It is also learnt that they were using fake identity just like those held in Jigani.

Investigations are underway to identify others who have settled in various parts of Karnataka and India, police sources said. *—PTI*

JD(S) dismisses Vijay's claims against HDK

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

JD(S) Social Media Cell President Chandan HS on Thursday dismissed the allegations made by Vijay Tata against Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy and MLC Ramesh Gowda as "false allegations."

In a letter, Chandan HS said that Vijay Tata does not hold any position within the JD(S) Social Media Cell and is doing this for publicity. He added that the party will file a complaint against Tata.

Earlier, Vijay Tata filed a complaint against JD(S) leader and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy and MLC Ramesh Gowda for alleged extortion and death threats. In the complaint, he has also requested security.

The complaint has been filed at Amruthahalli Police Station in Bengaluru.

Tata, in his complaint, accused HD Kumaraswamy and Ramesh Gowda of demanding Rs 50 crore from him and issuing life threats to him.

In a letter to the police, the complainant Vijay Tata said, "Speaking with Kumaraswamy, Ramesh Gowda handed me the phone to talk. During this conversation, Kumaraswamy mentioned the Channapatna byelection. He said, "This time, you have to pay Rs 50 crore for election expenses, which is necessary for us to win in the Channapatna by-election." Disturbed by Kumaraswamy's words, I immediately replied, Sir, I don't have that much money; I need to calculate my real estate projects..."

"He became angry with my response and threatened, "If you don't prepare Rs 50 crores, I don't know what I will do. If you run a real estate business in Bengaluru, it will be difficult for you to live here." *—PTI*

HISTORICALLY RICH

Mahisha cult: Ancient tradition thriving in State

MANGALURU, 3 OCT

As the controversial 'Mahisha Dasara' in Mysuru was being debated over its legitimacy and relevance, experts in coastal Karnataka have found conclusive evidence of the existence of Mahisha cult.

The Mahisha cult, a historically rich and unique tradition, continues to thrive on the west coast of South India, particularly in Karnataka. This ancient belief system finds its roots in a time when the region was ruled by powerful dynasties like the Alupas and the Vijayanagar Empire.

According to Prof T Murugeshi, retired Associate Professor in Ancient History and Archaeology at MSRS College, Shirva in Udupi taluk, the only known temple dedicated to Mahisha is situated in Barakuru, once the capital of the Alupa dynasty in Udupi district. He added that the presence of this temple underscores the deep cultural significance of Mahisha in the region.

The controversy surrounding the Mahisha cult, according to Prof Murugeshi, stems from a misinterpretation of the word Mahisha. In Puranic texts, the goddess is said to have slain Mahisha, who is often depicted as a demon.

Women visit a Dasara Dolls Festival on the occasion of Navaratri, in Bengaluru on Thursday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

However, Prof Murugeshi told PTI that the demonisation of Mahisha is a result of Vedic influence. The Vedic people, upon entering the South, viewed Mahisha and his followers as adversaries, particularly because Mahisha was seen as someone who resisted their spread and influence.

The term Mahisha has often been misunderstood as buffalo, reinforcing the idea of a demonic entity, he added.

But according to him, early inscriptions from the 8th and 9th centuries during the Alupa dynasty suggest a different narrative. Rulers from this period bore the title Mygesha or Mahige+Esha, which translates to lord of the earth or emperor. The feminine counterpart, Mahishi, refers to a queen. *—Salar News*

YADUVEER HOLDS 10TH PVT DURBAR

Scion of Mysuru royal family Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar conducted his 10th private durbar ritual at the palace on Thursday with the commencement of Navratri celebrations. The private durbar, which began on Thursday, will be held for all nine days during Navaratri festival till 12 October with the conclusion of Vijayadashami procession day. The private durbar tradition has a history of 415 years. Yaduveer ascended the gem-studded golden throne between 11.35am and 12.05pm and held the private durbar in Durbar Hall with darbaris on either side rendering 'Bahu Parak' and priests chanting vedic hymns. The durbar concluded with the playing of State anthem of erstwhile princely state of Mysuru, Kayo Shri Gowri Karuna Lahari. *—Salar News*

Govt removed nameplates of great people: BJP

BENGALURU, 3 OCT

BJP's State President BY Vijayendra alleged that Congress government in State was behaving like Muhammad of Ghazni and during the ongoing Dasara celebrations at Mysuru the nameplates of the great people who contributed greatly to Karnataka's heritage, culture and literature had been removed.

In a post on X, Vijayendra said in the past, Dasara exhibitions used to host grand programmes showcasing the splendour of the State's art and culture.

"Nameplates commemorating the people who made a great contribution to the Kannada land, language and heritage were installed for the audience who came to witness it.

"Nameplates of dignitaries such as Purandardasaru, Kanakadasaru, Dr Ra Bendre, Kuvempu, Dr Raj Kumar, V Kru Gokak, TN Balakrishna and music giants like Vasudevacharya, Pitelu Choudaiah were installed and an opportunity was provided for those who come to the exhibition to remember them," he said. *—ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

Protest against killing of Nasrallah: 8 arrested in UP

AMETHI/MUMBAI/ NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Eight people were arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Amethi for allegedly preparing to organise a procession without permission and raising slogans against the killing of Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli airstrike on Beirut, police said on Thursday. The arrests were made on Wednesday night in the Jais police station area, Meanwhile, Mumbai police have booked nearly 30 people for holding a candlelight protest march without permission at the city's Govandi area after against Nasrallah's killings. In response to the growing tensions in West Asia, Delhi Police have beefed up security around the Israeli Embassy in Tughlaq Road. Checking has been intensified. —*PTI*

Ferozeshah bungalow to be Kejri's new address

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal will vacate the chief minister's residence and move to an MP's bungalow in the Lutyens' Delhi on Friday, the party said in a statement. Kejriwal, who resigned as Delhi chief minister last month, will live with his family at the official residence of Punjab Rajya Sabha MP Ashok Mittal on Ferozeshah Road near Mandi House — close to the AAP headquarters at Ravi Shankar Shukla Lane. AAP convenor will move into bungalow number 5 on Ferozeshah Road in Lutyens' Delhi on Friday. The bungalow, which is close to the AAP headquarters, was officially allotted to the party's Rajya Sabha MP from Punjab Ashok Mittal. Earlier in the day, former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia shifted to a bungalow on Rajendra Prasad Road. The house is the official residence of AAP Rajya Sabha MP Harbhajan Singh, party leaders said. —*PTI*

Sharad asked me to join his party: BJP leader

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

Maharashtra BJP leader Harshvardhan Patil met NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar in Mumbai on Thursday, amid growing buzz that he is joining the Pawar-led party ahead of the state assembly elections. Patil said that he met Pawar at the latter's Silver Oaks residence in south Mumbai. "Pawar urged me to join his party and contest the assembly elections. He said he would get me elected," Patil said. State BJP minister Chandrakant Patil told reporters that the former state minister will regret his decision to join the Pawar-led party. Those realising that they will not be fielded again (by the BJP) for the assembly polls are quitting the party, he added. —*PTI*

Jaya Bachchan opts out of Parliament panel

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Samajwadi Party Rajya Sabha member Jaya Bachchan has opted out of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology chaired by BJP member Nishikant Dubey. Bachchan will now be a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour, Textiles and Skill Development chaired by former Karnataka chief minister Basavraj Bommai, according to a bulletin issued by the Rajya Sabha secretariat. Trinamool Congress leader Saket Gokhale, who was a member of the Standing Committee on Labour, has taken the place of Bachchan in the parliamentary panel on Communications and Information Technology. —*PTI*

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi with former BJP leader Ashok Tanwar in Mahendragarh district, Haryana, on Thursday; Delhi Chief Minister Atishi during a roadshow ahead of Haryana polls, at Barwala; Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami campaigns for BJP in Haryana

PHOTO: PTI

Haryana sees war of words as poll rally ends

In a major setback for BJP, it is 'ghar wapasi' for Ashok Tanwar as he joins Congress

CHANDIGARH, 3 OCT

The high-octane campaign in Haryana for the 5 October Assembly polls came to an end Thursday evening as the BJP hopes to buck anti-incumbency to retain power for a third consecutive term and the Congress eyes a comeback after a decade-long hiatus.

In an interesting development, senior BJP leader and former MP Ashok Tanwar joined Congress at Rahul Gandhi's rally in Mahendragarh district Thursday. Shortly before joining Congress, the former Sirsa MP was campaigning for the BJP candidate in Safidon Assembly constituency. AAP's Nilokheri (reserve) seat candidate Amar Singh joined Congress on Wednesday.

On the last day of campaigning, Gandhi and Bhupinder Singh Hooda, BJP's Yogi Adityanath and Nayab Singh Saini, JJP's Dushyant Chautala and INLD's Abhay Singh Chautala were among the prominent leaders who canvassed for their respective parties.

BJP's campaign was spearheaded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who addressed four rallies.

Modi said corruption runs in veins of the Congress and alleged it has "turned into a party of 'dalalon' (middlemen) and 'damadon'".

Gandhi also alleged that the government was working for a handful of billionaires. He said the Constitution protects the poor. "And these RSS people want to undermine the Constitution. It is their target." Attacking BJP, AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal said that BJP dispensation put him in jail to stop his works and to prove him dishonest.

BJP banks on development in Haryana

BJP may be banking on its development track record to come up trumps in the Haryana Assembly elections, but the voters appear to be troubled by the state government's thrust on digitisation through family and property identity certificates.

BJP's act of bringing in Nayab Singh Saini as the Chief Minister in place of Manohar Lal Khattar appears to have addressed the issue of disenchantment against the leadership, but not to the extent of guaranteeing a third consecutive term. According to farmers, many have delayed harvesting paddy in the hope of better prices later. —*PTI*

Haryana CM Nayab Saini supports BJP candidate Kapoor Valmiki at Dadu Nagari Bawani Kheda in Bhiwani district

PHOTO: PTI

RYOTS BACK ON TRACK

Farmers block railway tracks during their 'Rail Roko' protest in support of various demands, including justice in the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri incident. The protest was organised by Samyukta Kisan Morcha (non-political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha. 17 trains were halted because of the protest

PHOTO: PTI

BJP links Cong with kingpin of ₹5,600 crore drug bust

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

BJP on Thursday alleged that the kingpin arrested in the case of seizure of drugs worth Rs 5,600 crore is the chairman of the Delhi Youth Congress' RTI cell, a claim refuted by the Opposition party as baseless to influence the Haryana Assembly polls.

The Indian Youth Congress (IYC) said in a statement that Tushar Goel, the suspected kingpin, was expelled from the organisation on 17 October, 2022 for anti-party activities soon after BJP spokesperson and MP Sudhanshu Trivedi charged the opposition party with having links with the drug dealers.

In a press conference, Trivedi sought explanation from the Congress, questioning if the party used drug money in its election campaign and if its association with Goel extended to business as well.

- Delhi Police seized over 560 kilograms of cocaine and 40 kilograms of hydroponic marijuana estimated to be worth around Rs 5,620 crore

Was there an arrangement between the drug dealers and the Congress that they will be given a free run in Haryana if the party comes to power, he asked, alleging that the neighbouring state of Punjab is already in the grip of drugs.

Trivedi said Goel not only had pictures with senior Congress leaders like KC Venugopal and Deepender Singh Hooda but also had the mobile number of Hooda, the son of former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

Hitting back, the IYC accused BJP of trying to tarnish its image and that of the Congress leaders in order to influence the Haryana Assembly elections on 5 October, asserting that the accused has not been associated with it since his expulsion. The Delhi Police has made one of the biggest ever drug busts in the city, seizing over 560 kilograms of cocaine and 40 kilograms of hydroponic marijuana estimated to be worth around Rs 5,620 crore, officials said on Wednesday. —*PTI*

3-level probe ordered into Thrissur Pooram row

T'PURAM, 3 OCT

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday said the state cabinet has ordered a three-level probe, including into the role of ADGP M R Ajithkumar, in connection with the disruption of the Thrissur Pooram festivities in April this year.

One of the investigations would be by the state police chief against any alleged failures on the part of ADGP (Law and Order) Ajithkumar. The other would include a Crime Branch investigation into the various illegalities and an inquiry by the Intelligence ADGP into any failures by officials deputed to ensure the smooth happening of festival.

'Anvar joined attempts to depict LDF as communal'

Vijayan said that dissident Anvar has joined the attempts by some groups to characterise the CPI(M) and the LDF as part of both "majority and minority communalism" in the state. Vijayan said that Anvar was now targeting the CPI(M), LDF and since he was at their forefront as the CM, he was also being attacked.

'No assistance from Centre yet for Wayanad relief'

Vijayan accused the central government of not providing any specific aid or financial assistance to the state for relief and rehabilitation work in connection with the Wayanad landslides that claimed over 200 lives. He said that the state had sought Rs 219.2 crore as urgent financial assistance, but no such aid has come till date. —*PTI*

Police use water cannon to disperse members of Muslim Youth League during a protest against Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan

PHOTO: PTI

'J&K, NE, Naxal areas see 70% dip in violence'

AHMEDABAD, 3 OCT

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday claimed that incidents of violence have decreased by as much as 70 per cent in the three "hotspots" of Kashmir, the Northeast, and regions affected by Naxalism in the last ten years.

Shah, on a two-day Gujarat visit, also claimed that once the infrastructure needed for the implementation of the three new criminal laws is in place, people will get justice in three years from the point of registration of First Information Report to a hearing in the apex court.

"In ten years, people witnessed a huge change in the internal security landscape of the country. A decade ago, bomb blasts used to happen at regular intervals in these three hotspots -- Kashmir, Northeast, as well as the Left Wing Extremism-affected regions. It was so common in those days that such incidents were not even covered in the news," he said. Strong determination has brought about a transformation in Kashmir, he said. —*PTI*

MEA DUBS IT BIASED

US panel flags 'rising abuses' against religious minorities

WASHINGTON DC, 3 OCT

A US federal government commission has flagged the alleged worsening of religious freedom in India and called for it to be designated as a "Country of Particular Concern".

Authored by senior policy analyst Sema Hasan, the section on India describes the use of misinformation and disinformation -- including hate speech by government officials -- to incite violent attacks against religious minorities and their places of worship, the US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) said in a statement.

In its annual report, the USCIRF also recommended that the US Department of State designate India as a "Country of Particular Concern" for engaging in systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom.

PHOTO: PTI

The state department has so far refrained from accepting the recommendations.

"This report highlights how, throughout 2024, individuals have been killed, beaten, and lynched by vigilante groups, religious leaders have been arbitrarily arrested, and homes and places of worship have been demolished. These events constitute particularly severe violations of religious freedom," the USCIRF said.

Beginning with the previous Manmohan Singh-led government, India has consistently denied visas to USCIRF members to visit the country, citing "interference" in its internal affairs, it added.

India however trashed the report by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and described it as a "biased" organisation with a "political agenda". In its report, the USCIRF that monitors universal right to freedom of religion criticised India for alleged violations of religious freedom.

It also recommended to the US state department to declare India a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) in the context of religious freedom. —*PTI*

AZHAR SKIPS ED SUMMONS CALLED AGAIN ON 8 OCT

HYDERABAD, 3 OCT

Former Indian cricket captain and Congress leader Mohammad Azharuddin on Thursday failed to appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case linked to alleged financial irregularities in the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA), official sources said.

The 61-year-old former MP was asked to depose before the ED at its office here on Fateh Maidan Road and record his statement under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said.

The former cricketer sought more time from the agency. He has been issued fresh summons for 8 October, they said.

The probe is related to alleged financial irregularities in the HCA. The ED had conducted searches in connection with the irregularities in November last year. —*PTI*

Defamed my son: Nagarjuna sues T'gana Cong minister

HYDERABAD, 3 OCT

PHOTO: PTI

Telugu actor Nagarjuna Akkineni has filed a defamation case against Telangana Congress Minister Konda Surekha following her remarks regarding the divorce between his son Naga Chaitanya and actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu. The complaint has been filed under section 356 Bhartiya Nayay Sanhita in district court of Hyderabad.

The complainant Nagarjuna submits that using the public platform available to her as a public figure, the accused, while speaking to media on 2 October while attending Gandhi Jayanti programme made defamatory statements concerning the complainant and his family. He stated that the complainant's family, much like the complainant himself, enjoys immense reputation and respect. The complainant's son, Naga Chaitanya, is a successful and acclaimed actor in the Telugu film industry, continuing the family's proud legacy in cinema.

Naga Chaitanya's former spouse, Samantha, is a celebrated actress with a significant following and an impeccable reputation in her own right. Although their marriage, solemnized in the year 2017 and widely covered by the media, ended in a divorce due to personal differences in the year 2021. The complaint filed by Nagarjuna includes charges of criminal defamation, which could lead to serious legal repercussions. It also contains a civil defamation suit seeking financial compensation for the harm inflicted by the remarks. —*ANI*

SC puts Isha Foundation probe on hold

SC transfers plea against Sadhguru's foundation over 2 women's stay from HC to itself

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Supreme Court on Thursday halted the police probe into the alleged illegal confinement of two women at spiritual leader Jaggi Vasudev's Isha Foundation ashram at Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu.

Transferring to itself a habeas corpus petition of a man alleging that his two daughters were held captive inside the premises of the Foundation, a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud directed the Tamil Nadu Police to not take any further action in pursuance of the Madras High Court's. The bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said the police shall file the status report, as directed by the High Court in its 30 September order, before the top court.

The apex court passed the order after the Isha Foundation approached it challenging the High Court's order directing the Coimbatore Police to collect all case details registered against the Foundation and produce them before the court for further consideration.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the Foundation said around 150 police officials have entered the Foundation's ashram and are probing every corner.

The bench, which interacted with the two women in-chambers through video-conferencing, noted they have stated that both of them are residing at the ashram voluntarily and without any coercion.

The bench noted that, both the individuals have stated that they joined the ashram at the age of 24 and 27 years respectively. It said text of the High Court's order indicated that they are presently 42 and 39 years old respectively.

The apex court noted it was submitted before it that a similar petition was filed by the mother of the two individuals about eight years ago, in which the father had also appeared.

The grievances of the petitioner were that the Foundation was abusing certain people by brainwashing and converting them as monks and not even allowing their parents and relatives to meet them. —*PTI*

The bench noted the women are residing at Jaggi Vasudev's ashram voluntarily and without any coercion **PHOTO: PTI**

> **You can't let in the Army or the police into an establishment like this** -Supreme Court

2 get lifer in '98 murder case of Bihar minister

Supreme Court on Thursday sentenced two people, including ex-MLA Munna Shukla, to life imprisonment in the 1998 murder case of former Bihar minister Brij Bihari Prasad. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Sanjay Kumar and R Mahadevan partially set aside the Patna High Court verdict acquitting all the accused and asked convicts Mantu Tiwari and ex-MLA Shukla to surrender within 15 days.

SC gives bail to man in Mahadev betting case

Supreme Court gave bail to Chhattisgarh-based businessman Sunil Dammani, arrested by ED in August last year in a money laundering case linked to the Mahadev illegal gambling app. Dammani's counsel told that the he has been in jail for 14 month and the principal accused has not joined the probe and the trial in the case has not started yet. ED had raided Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel aide's home in the case.

12 booked over religious slogans in UP town

SHRAVASTI, 3 OCT

Twelve unidentified people have been booked over slogans they raised during a protest demanding the arrest of a traders' body office-bearer Kanhaiya Kasaudhan, accused of making objectionable remarks against Prophet Muhammad on social media, police said on Thursday. The FIR was registered at Ekauna Police Station on Wednesday, Station House Officer Ashwani Kumar Dubey said. Most of the individuals who were shouting the slogans outside the police station have been identified through CCTV footages, Dubey said. After the FIR, some people held a protest outside the police station demanding Kasudhan's arrest, he said, adding that probe is on in both the cases. —*PTI*

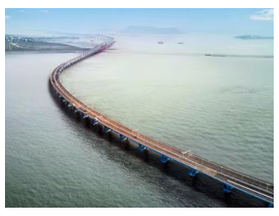


PHOTO: ANI

Man falls to death from Atal Setu; 2nd case in 3 days

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

A 52-year-old businessman allegedly committed suicide by jumping off the Atal Setu sea bridge connecting Mumbai and Navi Mumbai, police said on Thursday. The incident took place on Wednesday, the second such suicide on the Atal Setu in three days as a banker had ended his life in a similar manner on Monday. "The businessman, Philip Shah, ended his life by jumping off the Atal Setu on Wednesday morning. Shah, a resident of Matunga in central Mumbai, drove his sedan car on the Atal Setu, parked it at some point and jumped into the sea," he said. "Staff from the CCTV control room of the bridge noticed that a car was parked on the bridge, following which a rescue team was alerted. Its personnel rushed to the spot from where Shah jumped into the sea. —*PTI*

Pune school van driver held for raping 2 girls

PUNE, 3 OCT

Police have arrested the driver of a school van for allegedly sexually assaulting two six-year-old girl students in Pune city of Maharashtra, an official said on Thursday. The incident took place on 30 September on board the van when the schoolgirls were returning home after attending the school in Wanwadi area of the city, he said. "The accused allegedly touched the private parts of both the victims when they were returning home from the school. One of the girl students later narrated the incident to her mother, who then informed the school authorities," the official said. The accused driver, Sanjay Reddy, was booked and arrested. —*PTI*

Drug addiction health issue, not crime: HP top cop

SHIMLA, 3 OCT

Drug addicts caught with small quantities of contraband will not be treated as criminals and instead, will be given a chance to reform, the Himachal Pradesh police chief said on Thursday. The reason behind the move is a manifold increase in the number of cases registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act over the years. The number of such cases shot up from 644 in 2014 to 2,147 in 2023, which implies that the punishment has not acted as a deterrent. According to police data, a total of 3,118 people, including 103 females and six foreigners, were arrested under the NDPS Act in 2023. Only around 200-250 of them were caught with commercial quantities of contraband. The majority of these people were addicts-turned-peddlers, who took up the job to score their hit, the officer said. —*PTI*

IT'S NAVRATRI SEASON

Devotees carry an idol of Goddess Durga during Navratri festival celebration, in Nagpur, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Teens shoot dead doctor inside Delhi nursing home

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

A doctor was shot dead inside a nursing home in southeast Delhi's Kalindi Kunj area in the early morning hours, police said on Thursday.

The accused, both juveniles, came for treatment and shot Javed Akhtar, a Unani practitioner (BUMS), around 1.45am, they said.

According to a police officer, Akhtar was found in a chair oozing blood from the head inside the three-bed Nima Hospital located in a narrow lane of Khadda Colonyof the area.

An inquiry revealed the possible involvement of two boys, aged about 16, who had come to the hospital around 1am for dressing, the officer said.

One of them had a bandaged toe and had been to the hospital also the day before, it was revealed, the officer said.

After dressing, the two boys went inside Akhtar's cabin.

The accused, both juveniles, came for treatment and shot Javed Akhtar, a Unani practitioner (BUMS), around 1.45am **PHOTO: X**

Sometime later, night nursing staff Gajala Parveen and Mohammad Kamil heard a gunshot. Parveen rushed inside the cabin and found Akhtar sitting still in a pool of blood. Prima facie, it seems to be an instance of targeted killing, unprovoked as it was and involved recce, the officer said. Abid, an employee at the nursing home, said Akhtar had been working there for past two years. His duty began at 8 pm on Wednesday. —*PTI*

'Cease work' by docs cripples WB healthcare

Doctors at RG Kar Hospital unveiled a statue paying tribute to the medico who was raped and killed, starting a controversy **PHOTO: PTI**

KOLKATA, 3 OCT

Healthcare services in West Bengal's government-run hospitals were affected for the third consecutive day on Thursday as junior doctors struck work demanding justice for the rape-murder victim post-graduate trainee at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital and security at their workplaces.

This is the second time that junior doctors at state-run hospitals in Bengal went on a 'cease work' over their demands. However, alleging that the government did not fulfil its promises, the doctors went on a cease work again from Tuesday. "The government has not yet invited us for talks over our demands," Aniket Mahata, one of the doctors leading the agitation, told PTI. Meanwhile, police on Wednesday arrested one person for allegedly threatening and abusing a doctor at RG Kar Hospital. —*PTI*

WB PANEL GETS COMPLAINTS OF 'THREAT CULTURE'

KOLKATA, 3 OCT

The West Bengal Health Department received numerous complaints regarding the prevailing "threat culture and irregularities in the examination system" in various government hospitals and medical colleges following the RG Kar hospital incident, a senior official said on Thursday.

An official said that out of the 25 state-run medical colleges and hospitals, complaints have come from six.

Over 40 medics were suspended for six months and allowed on campus only for exams, at the College of Medicine and JNM Hospital in Nadia district following allegations of threatening fellow students. —*PTI*

TMC students' wing supporters show black flags to Governor

Black flags were shown to West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose by the students' wing of TMC outside Calcutta University when he went there for an award ceremony. TMCP supporters said that they were protesting the alleged irregular way of deciding to hold the award ceremony by the university authorities.

SONAM RELEASED, SECTION 144 WITHDRAWN

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on Thursday told the Delhi High Court that climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and his associates have been released from detention.

The senior law officer also said that the Delhi Police order prohibiting assembly and protests in various parts of Delhi has also been withdrawn.

The bench was hearing petitions seeking the release of Wangchuk and his associates as well challenging the prohibitory order. Around 120 people from Ladakh, including Wangchuk, were allegedly detained at the Delhi border by police on Monday night while marching to the capital to demand the inclusion of Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The Sixth Schedule pertains to the administration of tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram as "autonomous districts and autonomous regions". Wangchuk was leading the march, 'Delhi Chalo Padyatra', which began from Leh a month ago.

"The (prohibitory) order which was passed on September 30 now stands withdrawn in view of changed circumstances as they exist now. So far as persons who were allegedly detained, it was not detention in that sense, but they are also out," the solicitor general (SG) said. —*PTI*

2 youths captured in Manipur released

Oinam Thoithoi Singh and Thoithoiba Singh **PHOTO: IANS**

IMPHAL, 3 OCT

Two youths who were held hostage by armed men in Manipur's Kangpokpi were released and handed over to police on Thursday morning, seven days after they were captured, an officer said.

The two youths— Oinam Thoithoi Singh and Th Thoithoiba Singh— were handed over to Kangpokpi Superintendent of Police at Gamgiphai naka at around 5 am, the officer said.

The two reached Imphal safely escorted by state police and Assam Rifles, police said.

Three youthS from the Thoubal were reported missing on 27 September while they were on their way to New Keithelmanbi. On 29 September, one of the men, N. Johnson, was reportedly rescued by security forces, but two others, Oinam Thoithoi Singh and Thokchom Thoithoiba Meitei, remained in the custody of the alleged captors.

A series of negotiations involving both central and state officials were involved in securing the release of the two youths, the official said.

Meanwhile, 11 Kuki-Zo inmates from Sajiwa Central Jail in Imphal were sent to Kangpokpi on Thursday, days after being granted bail by a court, officials said.

The official, however, asserted that their release from jail and the freeing of two Meitei youths earlier were unrelated. However, the Kangpokpi district-based Committee on Tribal Unity (COTU) claimed that the release of the 11 inmates was a key demand in negotiations for freeing the youths. —*PTI*

SAI BABA IDOLS REMOVAL: HINDU GRP CHIEF DETAINED

VARANASI, 3 OCT

The head of a local outfit, which was running a campaign for removal of statues of Sai Baba from temples here, has been detained for breach of peace, police said on Thursday.

Ajay Sharma, the chief of Sanatan Rakshak Dal, was detained on Wednesday night after his outfit removed Sai Baba statues from many temples here on Tuesday.

Sharma had on Wednesday said they have removed Sai Baba's idol from 14 temples so far, including the idol of Sai Baba at the Bada Ganesh temple in Lohatia.

A number of devotees of Sai Baba have objected to the move and expressed concern over the security of his temples. A meeting of managers of Sai Baba temples was also held here on Wednesday in which it was decided to approach the police commissioner against those trying to vitiate the atmosphere. Sharma had said that only the worship of Lord Shiva, the supreme deity, should take place in Kashi (Varanasi). —*PTI*

YouTuber Elvish summoned after Rs 500cr fraud busted

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Police summoned YouTuber Elvish Yadav and comedian Bharti Singh and three more in an app-based scam involving a fraud of Rs 500 crore, an officer said on Thursday. Police received over 500 complaints alleging that social media influencers and YouTubers promoted the HIBOX app on their pages and lured people into investing through the app, the officer said. The main accused in the scam, Sivaram, 30, a resident of Chennai, has been arrested, police said. As per the complaint, social media influencers Saurav Joshi, Abhishek Malhan, Purav Jha, Harsh Limbachiya, Lakshay Choudhary, Adarsh Singh, Amit, and Dilraj Singh Rawat promoted the app and lured people into investing through the app. —*PTI*

IN CHHATTISGARH

Fake SBI branch dupes villagers of lakhs

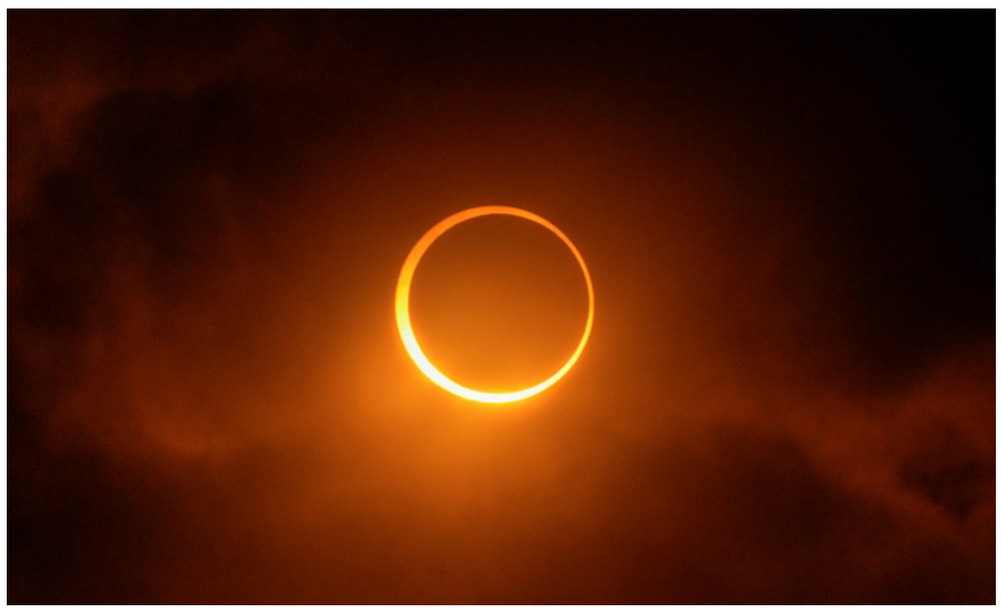
CHHAPORA, 3 OCT

Local authorities dismantled a fraudulent banking operation in the small village of Chhapora, located just 250m from Raipur, Chhattisgarh. The scam, which involved illegal appointments and elaborate setups to deceive villagers and unemployed individuals, was exposed just 10 days after the fake bank opened its doors.

The fraudulent branch, designed to mimic a legitimate bank, was equipped with cash counters, professional paperwork, and new furniture, creating an authentic atmosphere that fooled many residents. Villagers began visiting the "bank" to open accounts and conduct transactions, believing they were interacting with a reputable institution. New employees, excited to have secured jobs, were equally unaware of the deception.

The branch was designed to mimic a legitimate bank **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Suspicion arose when the manager of the nearby State Bank of India (SBI) branch in Dabra reported irregularities. On 27 September, a joint investigation by police and SBI officials led to an immediate interrogation at the Chhapora branch, uncovering the extensive fraud. Authorities found that the mastermind behind the operation had not only provided counterfeit documents and fake job titles but had also trained the recruits, ensuring they appeared knowledgeable and competent. In a further twist, the scheme involved extorting between 2 to 6 lakh rupees from the unsuspecting employees as a fee for securing promising jobs. The operation came to light thanks to the vigilance of local villager Ajay Kumar Agarwal, who, having applied for an SBI kiosk in Chhapora, grew suspicious of the hastily established bank. —*Agencies*



RING OF FIRE

Moon moving past the sun during an annular solar eclipse also known as a "ring of fire" eclipse in Puerto San Julian, Argentina. The celestial event occurs when the Moon passes directly between the Earth and the Sun, but due to its distance from Earth, it doesn't entirely cover the Sun's disk. At the eclipse's peak, the Sun's outer edges remained visible, creating a bright, fiery ring around the Moon.
PHOTO: PTI

Monsoon mayhem: Need for climate-resilient solutions

The monsoon season in India brings both blessings and challenges every year. While it replenishes water resources and is vital for agriculture, it also poses severe risks, including widespread flooding, landslides and other natural disasters. The monsoon of 2024 exposed glaring gaps in India's infrastructure and policy response, increasingly strained by the unpredictable rainfall patterns driven by climate change.

The monsoon season accounts for nearly 70 per cent of India's annual rainfall, which is critical for agriculture, water supply, and livelihoods. However, this blessing often turns into a disaster in poorly prepared areas. In 2023, over 1,400 deaths from monsoon-related disasters marked a significant increase from previous years, with Himachal Pradesh suffering over 200 deaths due to landslides, road collapses and flash floods.

Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Assam faced severe flooding and damage this monsoon
PHOTO: ANI

Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Assam faced severe flooding and damage this monsoon. The rising fatalities, including tragedies like the Wayanad landslide, highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive monsoon management strategies. Factors such as climate change, deforestation, unplanned urbanisation and inadequate infrastructure exacerbate vulnerabilities. Immediate action is essential to mitigate future risks and enhance preparedness.

Urban centres are particularly vulnerable to severe waterlogging and flooding. Cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru frequently experience these issues during the monsoon. In Delhi, the overflow of the Yamuna river led to large-scale evacuations and substantial damage to public infrastructure in 2023. This recurring problem is largely due to outdated and insufficient infrastructure.

For instance, Mumbai's drainage system, built during British colonial times, was designed for a maximum rainfall rate of 25 millimetres (mm) per hour. However, recent monsoons have seen rates exceeding 50 mm per hour, leading to severe flooding of streets and homes.

Chennai's floods in 2023, for example, were exacerbated by the loss of natural drainage channels due to unplanned urbanisation. The city's wetlands, once natural flood buffers, have been drastically reduced, worsening waterlogging during heavy rains. These issues have highlighted the urgent need to modernise urban infrastructure to cope with increasingly erratic monsoon patterns.

Waste management, or the lack thereof, is another critical issue. In many Indian cities, uncollected garbage blocks drains, further exacerbating flooding during the monsoon. This not only causes immediate flooding but also creates long-term health hazards, as stagnant water becomes a breeding ground for diseases such as dengue and malaria. Improved urban planning and waste management practices are essential if cities are to cope with the monsoon's challenges.

Despite the recurring nature of monsoon-related disasters, India's policy response remains largely reactive, focusing on post-disaster relief rather than preventive measures. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued guidelines for urban flood management, but their implementation at state and local levels is inconsistent. Early warning systems exist but are often inadequate or poorly communicated, leading to delayed evacuations and increased casualties. This slow pace reflects bureaucratic inertia and a lack of political will for long-term disaster preparedness.

The recent monsoon season, with its unusual intensity and unpredictability, exemplifies this trend. Research by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology showed an increase in extreme rainfall events over recent decades, attributed to rising global temperatures. Modernising urban drainage systems is crucial to handle increased rainfall volumes effectively. Implementing sustainable urban drainage systems, which replicate natural processes to manage surface water, can reduce the strain on existing infrastructure. Equally important is the protection and restoration of natural water bodies and wetlands. Strict enforcement of land-use regulations and reversing encroachments in these critical areas should be prioritised.

NDMA's guidelines need full implementation at state and local levels, with improved early warning systems and better coordination. Regular flood drills and community awareness programmes are vital for preparing populations for monsoon-related disasters.

—Courtesy, DownToEarth

SALAR ساڈا

How Gen Z is greasing wheels of handloom weaving

When Malipeddi Bhagyawati sat down to spin, as part of the lecture-demonstration of the various processes involved in the making of Patnulu khadi, organised in a small school in Bengaluru, she was in for a surprise.

The 20-odd teenaged students stumped her by jumping to answer what 'balni' or 'eku' is. They not only knew that the single spindle charkha she was using was rare these days -- although it was made uber popular by Gandhi -- they also knew the various processes of spinning, from ginning to carding.

The 60-year-old from Ponduru in Andhra Pradesh, the area where the unique Patnulu khadi is made, had already been to a couple of such lec-dems in the city before she came to this particular school in the hinterlands of Bengaluru.

For Samyuktha Gorrepati, a textile designer from Hyderabad, who has been trying to help the weaving community, including spinners, build sustainable weaver business enterprises for the last couple of years, this awareness shown by the teenagers is one of the missing links that has led to the downfall of handloom weaving in India.

"Traditionally, weavers cannot exist without spinners and they both cannot exist without an informed clientele who could tell the difference between the output of a single spindle loom like the one used in Ponduru and, say, the ambar charkha, which the khadi industry favours as it can accommodate up to 12 spindles and are easier to handle for large-scale productions," Gorrepati said.

It is only when people know how delicate the process of even spinning a yarn for making fabric as delicate as Patnulu, will they be ready to pay the price that would keep these skilled craftsmen in business, said Gorrepati.

As for the reason why a bunch of students should know their weft from the waft is because in their school, Vidyakshetra Gurukul in Kengeri, weaving and spinning are part of the curriculum.

But for 16-year-old Aradhika, preparing for her Class X exams, spinning is obviously much more than school syllabus. For one, she has been spinning for nine years now.

"I think it's a life skill worth learning, like say, swimming. Learning to spin and weave means you get to make your own clothes," said Aradhika. Her friend, 17-year-old Vanya, who is also preparing for her Class 12 exams, taking time off to go on visits like the one to Ponduru, is as important as cramming for exams.

"We saw at Ponduru how weaving is not done in isolation. It was more like the whole town had gotten together to enable weavers. It was a sight to behold," said Vanya.

Gorrepati agreed that the students of Vidyakshetra were on a different level when it came to awareness of sustainable practices.

"But, we have been doing this for a while, and this time around, we also went to another school in Yelahanka, which was not an alternative one. Definitely, something is shifting in people about these things," said Gorrepati.

The shifting awareness among people is something that Mysuru-based artist K L Sachidananda, who fell in love with spinning almost seven years ago when he visited a weaving centre in Melukote, is willing to vouch for as well.

Fifty-five-years-old Minakshi Prabhu from Indira Nagar, Bengaluru, another champion of spinning, who learnt spinning from Sachidananda almost 16 months ago, and who too organise spinning workshops, including for school students, said there are many reasons why one should take up spinning.

"When it comes to children, I think focus is a good enough reason. The time spent away from all those devices that they have access to these days, will do them good," said Prabhu.

She also said when the person gets the hang of spinning and commits to it, he or she can plug into the system that lets weaving flourish side by side.

"Making your own clothes from the yarn that you spin is the absolute game changer. What starts as fun, turns into passion and before you know it you are championing the cause of the weavers," added Sachidananda.

Between the members of Let's Spin, as Sachidananda and Prabhu and other serious spinners call their community, and the new converts, Sachidananda said he is able to give regular work to about half a dozen weavers in Melukote.

"It's a pity that skilled jobs like weaving and spinning should go out of business just because it is not feasible to pursue. I want to be the change and be the 1 per cent of the future generation that choose to weave or spin. Besides, spinning makes me happy," said Aradhika.

—PTI

Students aim to combat the decline of skilled artisanship of weaving
PHOTO: PIXABAY

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Indian companies struggle amid increasing ransomware attacks

India has been grappling with a steady increase in ransomware cyberattacks targeting businesses, banks and public services. Institutions and companies are being asked to do more on data protection.

Numerous government departments and the technology sector are among the primary targets of recent ransomware attacks in India, with health care, banking, manufacturing, and online commerce also affected.

The most common type of cyberattack deploys encrypting ransomware, which encrypts a victim's data and demands a ransom for the decryption key.

According to a report released in July by Check Point, a global cybersecurity company, India saw a 46 per cent year-on-year increase in overall cyberattacks in the second quarter of 2024.

In an incident from early August, 300 small Indian banks were forced to shut down online payment systems for a day due to a ransomware attack on IT provider C-Edge Technologies

In a major incident last year, hackers attacked the prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi, causing server shutdowns and disrupting health services.

In 2019, the southern states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were targeted by a ransomware attack that disrupted power utility systems.

Another recent report by Sophos, a cybersecurity company, showed that the impact of such attacks on Indian companies has grown more severe, with ransom demands and recovery costs increasing year-on-year.

It also found that 65 per cent of those hit by ransomware were inclined to pay the ransom to recover the data, with the average cost for data being USD 1.35 million. The average ransom demand was USD 4.8 million, with 62 per cent of demands exceeding USD 1 million.

Cyber experts and IT specialists told DW that the number of Indian companies facing such attacks will increase unless stronger cybersecurity measures are in place to protect sensitive information.

"Companies are not serious on their IT policies. Mere investment and migration to cloud services for internal policies are inadequate. Companies have been blatantly ignoring the compliance requirements and advisories being given by regulators," Milind Dewanji director of Pace computers, an IT hardware services company, told DW.

In 2019, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were targeted by a ransomware attack that disrupted power utility systems
PHOTO: PIXABAY

Dewanji added that the role of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) has become more vital, and that cyber threats need to be taken seriously on the managerial level.

"Data is being compromised at times by immature behavior on part of employees resulting in being an easy target," he said.

"The larger conglomerates and banks have disaster recovery capability and solutions in place, but still prefer to pay the amount asked … to ensure business continuity," Dewanji added.

Vishal Vasu, director and chief technology officer of Dev Information Technology, an IT services and solutions company, pointed out that cybercriminals are becoming more aggressive, exploiting technology and behavioral vulnerabilities.

The recent ransomware attack on C-Edge Technologies exemplified the severe impact these attacks can have on critical sectors.

"Such incidents raise significant concerns about the vulnerabilities within the financial infrastructure and the potential for widespread disruption if firms choose to pay ransoms rather than strengthening their cybersecurity measures," Vasu told DW.

"Cooperative and rural banks must prioritize investments in cybersecurity, including the implementation of comprehensive backup and recovery systems. They should also engage in regular employee training and awareness programs to foster a security culture," he added.

Attacks on Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which are vital to the Indian economy, have been a particular cause for concern.

Given that MSMEs account for over 40% of India's total exports, many feel it is imperative to adopt proactive measures to mitigate the risk of ransomware attacks.

"MSME companies do not take [data] backup as a critical requirement and have a casual approach," said Dewanji.

"Here, the government must play a significant part in augmenting their skills to understand the nature of such attacks," he added.

Pawan Duggal, a cyber law expert, who has studied the issue closely, said India is beginning to see corporate ransomware fatigue as companies are falling behind on compliance.

"Most companies are not reporting ransomware attacks as part of their statutory duty to report cybersecurity breaches," Duggal told DW.

"As corporate [data] backup regimes fall behind for a variety of reasons, and as companies do not have much time, they are relying more on making payments for ransom," Duggal added.

The expert said India lacks a dedicated legal framework to deal with the challenges of ransomware. "India needs to quickly come up with a dedicated new legal framework to deal with the challenges of ransomware. Data is the most precious commodity in today's data economy," added Duggal.

According to Cybersecurity Ventures, which provides research and reports on the costs of cybercrime, ransomware is a global threat that is set to cost victims around $265 billion annually by 2031.

It predicts, with every new attack ransomware, perpetrators progressively refine their malware payloads and related extortion activities.

—Courtesy, DW News

Israel extends evacuation orders in Lebanon

Tel Aviv says it killed a senior Hamas leader in airstrike in Gaza Strip 3 months ago

BEIRUT, 3 OCT

The Israeli military on Thursday warned people to evacuate a city and other communities in southern Lebanon that are north of a UN-declared buffer zone, signalling that it may widen a ground operation launched earlier this week against the Hezbollah militant group.

Israel has told people to leave Nabatieh, a provincial capital, and other communities north of the Litani River, which formed the northern edge of the border zone established by the UN Security Council after the 2006 war in a resolution that both sides accuse the other of violating.

At least eight Israeli soldiers have been killed in clashes with Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, where Israel announced the start of what it says is a limited ground incursion earlier this week. The region was meanwhile bracing for Israeli retaliation following an Iranian ballistic missile attack.

The Israeli military said Thursday that it had struck around 200 Hezbollah targets across Lebanon, including weapons storage facilities and observation posts. It said the strikes killed at least 15 Hezbollah fighters.

Hezbollah said its fighters detonated a roadside bomb when Israeli forces entered the Lebanese border village of Maroun el-Ras, kiling and wounding soldiers. It was not possible to independently confirm the claims made by either side.

So far, ground clashes between Israeli forces and Hezbollah militants have been confined to a narrow strip along the border.

Under UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the monthlong 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, the militants were to withdraw north of the Litani, and Lebanon's armed forces were to patrol the border region along with UN peacekeepers.

Neither Lebanon's army nor the peacekeepers were capable of imposing any agreement on Hezbollah by force, and Israel says it defied the resolution and built extensive military infrastructure in towns and villages near the border. Lebanon has accused Israel of violating other parts of the resolution.

Israel says it is targeting Hezbollah after nearly a year of rocket attacks that began 8 October and displaced some 60,000 Israelis from communities in the north. Israel has carried out retaliatory strikes over the past year that have displaced tens of thousands on the Lebanese side.

In recent weeks, Israelis strikes in Lebanon have killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and several of his top commanders. Hundreds more airstrikes across large parts of Lebanon since mid-September have killed at least 1,276 people, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

The vast majority of recent strikes have been in areas where Hezbollah has a strong presence. But Israel has also carried out strikes in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, and a strike in central Beirut earlier this week killed three members of a leftist Palestinian militant group. The Israeli military said Thursday that it killed a senior Hamas leader in an airstrike in the Gaza Strip around three months ago. It said that a strike on an underground compound in northern Gaza killed Rawhi Mushtaha and two other Hamas commanders. Mushtaha was a close associate of Yahya Sinwar, the top leader of Hamas who helped mastermind the 7 October attack. Sinwar is believed to be alive and in hiding inside Gaza. —*PTI*

Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli airstrike in Dahiyeh, Beirut, Lebanon, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

UK, France warn citizens amid escalating war in West Asia

LONDON/TEHRAN, 3 OCT

The UK government announced further chartered planes on Thursday to help British nationals leave Lebanon in response to the deteriorating security situation amid the conflict with Israel and to meet the demand for a flight chartered earlier this week. "Recent events have demonstrated the volatility of the situation in Lebanon," said UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy. "The safety of British nationals in Lebanon continues to be our number one priority. That's why we are announcing additional chartered flights to help those who want to leave. I urge all British nationals still in Lebanon to register with the FCDO and leave the country immediately," he said. Meanwhile, the French Embassy in Iran asked all its nationals to be wary of the developments in the Middle East and asked them to be careful in their travels to Iran. They advised their nationals to absolutely refrain from coming to Iran and asked them to leave Iranian territory as soon as possible. —*PTI/ANI*

LOVE IN THE TIME OF WAR

A heartwarming video of a newlywed couple amid Iran's attack on Israel went viral on on social media. In the video, they shared their first dance in an underground bunker as Iran launched over 200 missiles toward Israel

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Alcohol poisoning kills dozens of people in Iran

TEHRAN, 3 OCT

At least 26 people died in Iran after drinking alcoholic beverages that contained toxic methanol in recent days, state media said. The official IRNA news agency reported late Wednesday that toxic methanol had killed men and women in various cities and towns in the northern provinces of Mazandaran and Gilan and the western province of Hamadan. Alcohol poisoning also led to hundreds of hospitalisations, IRNA said. The source of the alcoholic beverages was not clear in the reports. The consumption of alcohol has been generally prohibited in Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution brought hardline Islamists to power. Many Iranians buy alcoholic drinks from bootleggers who make them secretly. In 2020, toxic alcohol killed more than 700 people. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Security forces gun down six BLA militants in Pak

KARACHI, 3 OCT

Six militants of the banned Balochistan Liberation Army have been killed by security forces during an operation in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province, police said. A security official said the incident occurred during a raid at a BLA hideout in Harnai district on Wednesday. Acting on a tip-off, security forces raided the area. In the ensuing gunfight six militants were killed, he said, adding that those killed in the gunfight were involved in several other attacks on security forces and civilians. In a separate incident at Dera Murad Jamali area on Wednesday, armed men attacked a prison van, SSP Fahad Khan Khosa said. Khosa said the armed men opened fire at the van when it came out of the prison's main gate, resulting in the killing of one prisoner. —*PTI*

SL to face third major election before 2024 ends

COLOMBO, 3 OCT

Amid continued economic troubles, Sri Lanka is to witness two more island-wide major elections before the end of the year, months after the recently concluded Presidential polls. The parliamentary election is scheduled for 14 November following the presidential election that was held on 21 September in the cash-strapped nation. Third would be the local council elections in December. Meanwhile, a one-off election scheduled for the southern province's Elpitiya local council will be held on 26 October. Sri Lanka's independent Election Commission said arrangements would be made to hold the local election immediately after the parliamentary polls. —*PTI*

US bans goods from China over 'forced labour'

WASHINGTON DC, 3 OCT

The Department of Homeland Security announced on Wednesday that it would ban the import of goods from a Chinese steel manufacturer and a Chinese maker of artificial sweetener, accusing both of being involved in the use of forced labour from China's far-west region of Xinjiang. The action broadens the scope of the US effort to counter products from entering the country that the government says are tied to human rights abuses. The additions to the entity list under the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act marks the first time a China-based steel company or aspartame sweetener business have been targeted by US law enforcement, DHS said. The federal law signed at the end of 2021 followed allegations of human rights abuses by Beijing against members of the Uyghur group. —*PTI*

12 people injured after Russia bombs Ukraine

KYIV, 3 OCT

A Russian glide bomb struck a five-story apartment block in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, injuring at least 12 people including a 3-year-old girl, local officials said Thursday.

The bomb hit between the third and fourth floors of the building on Wednesday night, igniting blazes, Kharkiv regional Governor Oleh Syniehubov said. Firefighters searched for survivors through smoke and rubble.

Glide bombs have become an increasingly common weapon in the war. They have terrorised civilians and bludgeoned the Ukrainian army's frontline defences.

They were a key weapon in Russia's capture of the tactically significant town of Vuhledar on Wednesday, as Russian forces wreak destruction on the eastern Donetsk region and force weary Ukrainian troops to withdraw from obliterated towns and villages.

Ukraine has no effective countermeasure for glide bombs, which are launched from Russian aircraft inside Russia.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the latest Kharkiv attack highlighted the urgent need for increased support from Ukraine's Western allies.

Russia has had the battlefield initiative since late last year, when a Ukrainian counteroffensive petered out. Ukraine is grappling with a critical manpower problem on the front line and is straining to hold back Russia's grinding assaults.

Both sides have kept up regular cross-border aerial attacks, usually at night.

Ukraine's air force said Thursday that 78 out of 105 Shahed drones launched by Russia overnight were destroyed on Thursday as 15 regions of the country came under attack. The Russian military, meanwhile, intercepted 113 Ukrainian drones overnight, according to a statement by the Defence Ministry in Moscow. —*PTI*

ROADS FLOODED

Typhoon Krathon makes landfall in southern Taiwan

KAOHSIUNG, 3 OCT

Typhoon Krathon made landfall Thursday in Taiwan's major port city of Kaohsiung, bringing torrential rains and fierce winds to the island's south. Trees were brought down by high winds and roads were flooded, prompting the closure of schools and businesses.

Krathon made landfall in the industrial Siaogang district of Kaohsiung around 12.40pm the Central Weather Administration said. It packed maximum sustained winds of 126 kph with gusts of 162 kph.

The typhoon was forecast to move slowly north and weaken into a tropical depression by Friday before it reaches the capital, Taipei. It was expected to then head across the Taiwan Strait toward the Chinese coast. Meanwhile, a fire at a hospital in southern Taiwan killed at least nine people Thursday as the island was being battered by a typhoon.

Kaohsiung earlier urged its residents to take cover from potentially disastrous winds and rain, which tore down storefronts and flooded car parks but caused no reported loss of life.

People woke up Thursday to mobile phone alerts urging them to take shelter from the potentially dangerous winds. —*PTI*

A man pedals through a flooded road as Typhoon Krathon makes landfall in Kaohsiung, southern Taiwan, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

700 PTI WORKERS ARRESTED AHEAD OF PROTEST

ISLAMABAD, 3 OCT

Over 700 supporters of the jailed former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan were arrested from different parts of Punjab province on Thursday, a day before a major showdown in Islamabad by his party for the independence of the judiciary, release of the party founder and against rising inflation.

"Do or die — 4 October is the battle cry! No more waiting, no more silence. This is the final stand at D Chowk (Islamabad), where the brave gather and the weak fall behind.

We are unstoppable, unbreakable, and ready to fight for the soul of this nation. Either we win or we perish trying," Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) said soon after the arrests started.

It said the Punjab police arrested over 700 its workers and leaders in different districts including Bahawalpur, Faisalabad, Mianwali and Jhangh following its announcement to hold protests on Friday demanding independence of the judiciary, release of party founder Imran Khan and against rising inflation. Punjab's provincial government had adopted similar measures to prevent PTI's Jalsa – the power show – at Lahore last month.

Khan, 71, has been in jail since his arrest on 5 August, 2023. Facing dozens of cases, he has been convicted in a few of them.

His party has been staging protests demanding his release and claiming that the government should adhere to the constitution and the independence of the judiciary.

PTI's central information secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram said the government led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had sealed the Red Zone in Islamabad and was taking similar measures in other cities to stop PTI workers from holding protests and public meetings. —*PTI*

Donald Trump; Tanya Chutkan **PHOTOS: X/WIKIPEDIA**

'Trump resorted to crimes to overturn election result'

WASHINGTON DC, 3 OCT

A federal judge in the United States has made public new evidence against Donald Trump in an ongoing election subversion case in Washington, DC.

Judge Tanya Chutkan unsealed a 165-page court filing on Wednesday that details the prosecution's argument that Trump — in his final months as president — acted in a private capacity to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

The filing is the latest effort by Special Counsel Jack Smith to illustrate how presidential immunity does not apply to Trump's actions. It presents perhaps the most complete case yet of the 78-year-old's efforts to cling to power as his term expired.

The brief also relays numerous interactions in which the former president was told repeatedly there was no evidence his 2020 election battle with Joe Biden was "rigged" or stolen through massive voter fraud, as Trump repeatedly claimed.

A central part of the brief is the allegation Trump's actions were carried out in his capacity as a private individual, rather than in an official role.

"The defendant asserts he is immune from prosecution for his criminal scheme to overturn the 2020 presidential election because, he claims, it entailed official conduct," says the filing.

The 195-page document lists a number of occasions when advisers and staff warned Trump that, despite his assertions, there was no evidence of wrongdoing during the 2020 election. —*PTI*

Indian origin ex-minister in Singapore gets jail for corruption

SINGAPORE, 3 OCT

Singapore's Indian-origin former transport minister S Iswaran has been sentenced to 12 months jail on Thursday by the High Court for obtaining gifts worth about SGD 403,300 over seven years, from two businessmen he considered his friends.

The 62-year-old pleaded guilty to four charges relating to receiving gifts and one blocking justice on September 24, the first day of trial proceedings, cutting short what was set to be a protracted trial with 56 prosecution witnesses.

In sentencing, Justice Vincent Hoong said he had considered submissions on sentence from both prosecution and defence but was "ultimately unable to agree with both the positions taken".

In his sentencing remarks, Justice Hoong emphasised that trust and confidence in public institutions are the bedrock of effective governance.

The judge said, "This can all too easily be undermined by a public servant who falls below standards of integrity and accountability."

Between November 2015 and December 2022, Iswaran obtained valuables like musical, football and Formula 1 tickets from Singapore GP majority shareholder Ong Beng Seng, as well as bottles of whisky and wine from construction boss Lum Kok Seng. —*PTI*

S Iswaran **PHOTO: PTI**

387 DETAINED

Deepfake porn haunts S Korea women

SEOUL, 3 OCT

Three years after the 30-year-old South Korean woman received a barrage of online fake images that depicted her nude, she is still being treated for trauma. She struggles to talk with men. Using a mobile phone brings back the nightmare.

Many other South Korean women recently have come forward to share similar stories as South Korea grapples with a deluge of non-consensual, explicit deepfake videos and images that have become much more accessible and easier to create. It was not until last week that parliament revised a law to make watching or possessing deepfake porn content illegal. Most suspected perpetrators in South Korea are teenage boys. Observers say the boys target female friends, relatives and acquaintances -- also mostly minors -- as a prank, out of curiosity or misogyny.

The attacks raise serious questions about school programmes but also threaten to worsen an already troubled divide between men and women.

Thousands of young women have staged protests demanding stronger steps against deepfake porn. Politicians, academics and activists have held forums. South Korea's telecommunications and broadcast watchdog said on Monday that Telegram has pledged to enforce a zero-tolerance policy on illegal deepfake content. 387 people were detained this year, more than 80 per cent of them teenagers. The problem has gained urgency given South Korea's rifts over gender roles, workplace discrimination, mandatory military service for men. —*PTI*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

PHOTO: ANI

Indian logistics market to expand to ₹13.4T: Report

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The Indian logistics market, valued at Rs 9 trillion in FY23, is projected to grow significantly, reaching Rs 13.4 trillion by FY28, registering a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8-9 per cent, according to a recent report by Motilal Oswal. This growth is being fuelled by structural shifts, technological advancements, and government initiatives aimed at reducing logistics costs and improving infrastructure. The National Logistics Policy, unveiled in September 2022, has set goals to optimise India's logistics landscape. It has focused on increasing the share of railways in the freight movement through the development of dedicated freight corridors. *—PTI*

Rupee plunges 14p to settle at 83.96 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

Rupee depreciated 14 paise to settle at 83.96 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, as volatile geopolitical situation triggered a surge in crude oil prices and weighed down by a steep fall of over two per cent in domestic equity markets. According to forex traders, a strong American currency and unabated outflow of foreign funds fuelled by the bullish Chinese markets also accelerated the rupee's slide. At the inter-bank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 83.91 and touched the low of 83.97 against the greenback during intra-day. The unit ended the session at 83.96 (provisional) against the American currency, registering a steep loss of 14 paise from its previous closing level. On Tuesday, the rupee settled 3 paise lower at 83.82 against the American currency. Forex markets were closed on Wednesday on account of Mahatma Gandhi Jayanthi. *—PTI*

Ashok Leyland ties up with Nidec for e-drive motors

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

Commercial vehicle maker Ashok Leyland on Thursday said it has entered into a partnership with Japanese firm Nidec for developing e-drive motors for commercial vehicles. Under the multi-pronged collaboration, the two partners will work to establish a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Electric Drive Units (EDUs), which will focus on developing motor technologies and power electronics systems for EVs, along with innovations in gear-shifting mechanisms, Ashok Leyland said in a statement. The collaboration will also involve joint research and development efforts, with both companies contributing to skilling, lab infrastructure, and defining novel, differentiated motor technologies for the EV portfolio of Ashok Leyland and its subsidiary Switch Mobility, the company said. *—PTI*

GPay to provide gold loans by Muthoot Finance

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Global tech titan Google on Thursday said it has tied up with Muthoot Finance to provide gold-backed loans through its mobile payments service GPay. Google also announced that from 3 October, 2024, its AI assistant Gemini Live will be available in Hindi, and later eight more Indian languages will be included. These announcements were made by the company officials at the 10th edition of 'Google for India' event here. GPay is expanding its offerings by introducing gold-backed secured loans in collaboration with Muthoot Finance. According to Google India MD Roma Datta Chobey, about 11 per cent of the world's gold is housed in India. People across India can now access this credit product. *—PTI*

Investors lose ₹9.78L crore amid West Asia conflict

Sensex, Nifty fall by 1,769 pts & 546 pts as market slumps 2%

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

Equity investors became poorer by Rs 9.78 lakh crore on Thursday, dragged by a sharp fall in the stock markets where the BSE Sensex plunged over 2 per cent, amid spiralling conflict in the West Asia and unabated foreign fund outflows.

The BSE Sensex tumbled 1,769.19 points or 2.10 per cent to settle at 82,497.10. During the day, it plummeted 1,832.27 points or 2.17 per cent to 82,434.02.

The NSE Nifty slumped 546.80 points or 2.12 per cent to 25,250.10.

Tracking an extremely weak trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by Rs 9,78,778.57 crore to Rs 4,65,07,685.08 crore (USD 5.54 trillion) in a single day.

From the 30 Sensex firms, Larsen & Toubro, Axis Bank, Tata Motors, Reliance Industries, Maruti, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Adani Ports, Titan and HDFC Bank were the major laggards.

JSW Steel emerged as the only gainer.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 5,579.35 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

All indices ended lower. Realty tanked 4.49 per cent, capital goods (3.18 per cent), auto (2.94 per cent), services (2.87 per cent), industrials (2.75 per cent) and oil & gas (2.52 per cent).

A total of 2,881 stocks declined while 1,107 advanced and 88 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, Hong Kong settled lower while Tokyo ended in the positive territory. Markets in mainland China will be closed for the rest of the week due to holiday. European markets were trading mostly lower.

The US markets ended marginally higher on Wednesday. *—PTI*

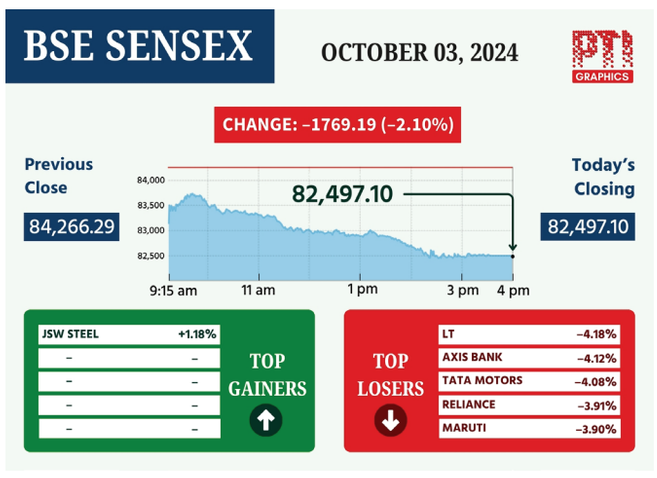


PHOTO: PTI

Dabur India shares tumble 8%

Shares of FMCG firm Dabur India Ltd on Thursday slumped nearly 8 per cent after the company said its profitability in the second quarter will be impacted due to low primary sales with heavy rain and floods in parts of India affecting out-of-home consumption and consumer offtake despite demand trends saw some improvement. The stock tanked 7.69 per cent to Rs 571.25 on the BSE. At the NSE, it declined 7.75 per cent to Rs 571. *—PTI*

Oil prices on boil amid Iran, Israel conflict

Rising tensions between Israel and Iran in the Middle East has sent global crude oil prices rising. The prices rose for a third consecutive day on Thursday reaching towards $75 a barrel, after Israel and the US both vowed at retribution after Iran launched around 180 ballistic missiles. The iCOMDEX Crude Oil index of the Multi Commodity Exchange showed oil prices rose to `7,749.35 a barrel from `7,294.35. *—PTI*

SOLAR POWER DEAL

Adani to supply clean energy for Google cloud

Google powers most of its cloud operations through electricity procured from the grid PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Billionaire Gautam Adani's group will supply clean energy to power Google's cloud services and operations in India, the two firms said on Thursday.

Adani group will supply 61.4 megawatt of electricity from a new solar-wind hybrid project located at its 30 gigawatt (GW) Khavda renewable energy park in Gujarat.

Google powers most of its cloud operations and services through electricity procured from the grid and is planning to run the entire operations on clean energy by 2030.

Adani is expected to start commercial operations in the third quarter of 2025.

At the 'Google for India' event, the search giant also announced a partnership with CleanMax for sourcing 125.4 MW of clean energy to power its offices and cloud regions in India.

Of the contracted volumes, 66 MW solar energy will come from Rajasthan and 59.4 MW wind energy from Karantaka.

"These projects are expected to start commercial operations in Q4 2025 and will deliver carbon-free energy to the grid where Google operates offices and cloud regions in India," Google said.

While Google made the announcement at the 'Google for India' event here, the Adani Group gave details in a statement.

This innovative collaboration will help advance Google's 24/7 carbon-free energy goal by ensuring cloud services and operations in India are supported by clean energy and thereby contribute to the sustainable growth of Google in India. Adani had previously announced plans to set up data centres run on clean energy.

It had in October 2022 leased 4.64 lakh square feet of space at its data centre in Noida to Raiden Infotech, an entity of Google. *—PTI*

Goyal meets US business leaders to seek investments for India

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has held a series of meetings with US business leaders in New York to seek investments in India.

He met Chief Operating Officer of BlackRock Robert Goldstein, Chairman and CEO of Systems Technology Group Anup Popat, CEO of Tillman Holdings Sanjiv Ahuja, chief executive officer of C4V Shailesh Upreti, and Janus Henderson Investors CEO Ali Dibadj.

During the meetings, Goyal discussed opportunities for collaboration to position India as a global manufacturing hub and invited the investors to increase their commercial and trade footprints in India, the commerce ministry said.

Chief Operating Officer of BlackRock Robert Goldstein with Union Minister Piyush Goyal in New York, US PHOTO: ANI

In another meeting, the minister emphasised the government's commitment to improving ease of doing business, infrastructure development, IPR (intellectual property rights) reforms, and prioritising manufacturing sectors through appropriate incentive schemes. *—PTI*

EMCURE SIGNS PACT WITH GILEAD FOR HIV DRUG

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Emcure Pharmaceuticals on Thursday said it has signed a royalty-free voluntary licensing agreement with Gilead Sciences Ireland UC to manufacture and supply generic versions of HIV treatment drug lenacapavir.

This agreement is part of a broader effort to increase global access to lenacapavir for HIV prevention and treatment, with a focus on high-incidence, resource-limited countries, the company said in a regulatory filing.

Emcure will play a crucial role in ensuring the availability of high-quality, low-cost versions of lenacapavir in 120 countries, primarily in low- and lower-middle-income regions, it added. *—PTI*

Tata starts partial ops at fire-hit Hosur plant

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Tata Electronics resumed partial operations at its fire-hit Tamil Nadu-based factory from Thursday.

The operations have been suspended since 28 September after a massive fire broke out at a chemical godown of the electronics component factory of Tata Electronics at Hosur in Tamil Nadu.

"The safety and well-being of our employees is always our top priority, and we've been working diligently since Saturday to support our team and to identify the cause of the fire at our Hosur facility. We plan to restart work in many areas of the facility today. And as we work toward resuming full operations, all our team members will continue to receive full pay," Tata Electronics said in a statement.

Tata Electronics makes smartphone cases for Apple's iPhone 15 and iPhone 16 series at Hosur factory.

The fire incident is not expected to impact supplies of iPhones as the company is said to have enough stocks to meet the demand for the next three months. *—PTI*

Kiran Shaw's Biocon Biologics refinances Rs 9K cr long-term debt

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

on Thursday said it has refinanced Rs 9,347 crore (USD 1.1 billion) long-term debt through dollar bonds and new syndicated facility.

The company said the bonds will be issued by Biocon Biologics Global plc, a wholly owned subsidiary of the company, and will be backed by a strong security package, Biocon Biologics, a unit of Biocon Ltd, said in a statement.

The transaction is expected to settle on 9 October, 2024 subject to customary closing conditions, it added.

PHOTO: BIOCON

"This strategic refinancing underscores our commitment to enhance financial flexibility, fuels Biocon Biologics' long-term growth and is core to the consolidation phase of our business," Biocon Biologics CEO and Managing Director Shreehas Tambe said. The company expects the transaction to strengthen capital structure and allow it to redeploy investments into the business, including advancing our differentiated pipeline of biosimilars, he added.

"It will also enable us to diversify our investor base to include marquee global funds and healthcare investors who seek to participate in Biocon Biologics' growth story," Tambe said. Shares of Biocon were trading 0.81 per cent down at Rs 367.40 apiece on BSE. *—PTI*

Gold touches all-time high of Rs 78,300 per 10g

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Gold and Silver prices rebounded on Thursday due to fresh demand from stockists and retail consumers for the ongoing festival.

The precious metal rose Rs 200 to revisit the all-time high level of Rs 78,300 per 10g, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

It had closed at Rs 78,100 per 10 g on Tuesday.

Silver also jumped by Rs 665 to Rs 93,165 per kg from Rs 92,500 per kg in the previous close.

Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed by Rs 200 to reclaim its all-time high of Rs 77,900 per 10g. The metal had finished at Rs 77,700 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

PHOTO: PTI

The commodity markets were closed on Wednesday on account of Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti.

Traders said the sentiment turned better on rising demand at the beginning of 'Navratri', an auspicious week in Hindu mythology for purchasing new things particularly precious metals.

"A possible increase in jewellery demand amid peak festival season and a weak Indian rupee also aided the commodity in the domestic market," Hareesh V, Head of Commodities at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Meanwhile, in futures trade, gold contracts for December delivery declined Rs 440 or 0.58 per cent to Rs 75,950 per 10g on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). However, silver climbed Rs 225 or 0.25 per cent to trade at Rs 91,600 per kg on the MCX. However, silver climbed Rs 225 or 0.25 per cent to trade at Rs 91,600 per kg on the MCX. In the Asian trading hours, Comex gold is trading 0.17 per cent lower at USD 2,665.20 per ounce. *—PTI*

8,000 CR FROM DELHI

Festive season to generate Rs 50K cr in business

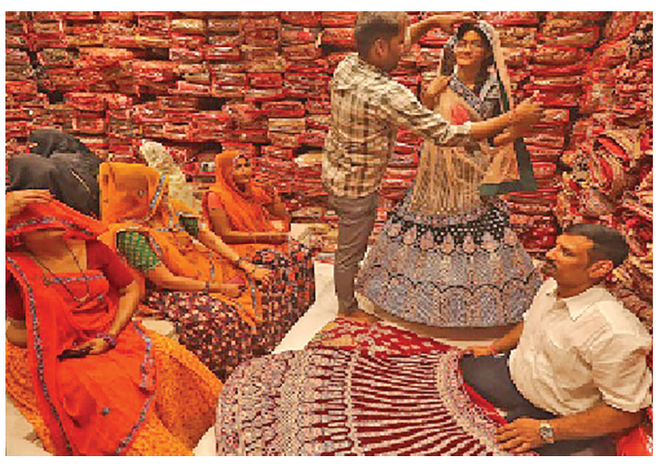
NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The festival season in India has kicked off with celebrations like Navratri, Ramleela, Garba, and Dandiya expected to generate business of over Rs 50,000 crore nationwide, according to an estimate by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT).

Delhi alone is projected to contribute over Rs 8,000 crore, as markets are expected to witness a surge in consumer activity, providing a significant boost to traders.

More than 1 lakh events, including religious, cultural, social, and spiritual programs, will be organised nationwide, providing employment to millions.

With major celebrations like Navratri, Ramleela, Garba, and Dandiya, the festival season will continue with Vijayadashami, Durga Visarjan, Diwali, Chhath Puja, and other major festivities.



There is also a substantial increase in demand for traditional clothing, pooja materials and sweets PHOTO: PTI

Delhi will host over 1,000 Ramleelas and hundreds of Durga Puja pandals, while Garba and Dandiya, traditionally celebrated in Gujarat, will see widespread participation across the country, including in the capital city.

There is also a substantial increase in demand for traditional clothing, pooja materials, sweets, and decorative items during the festivals.

Food items and sweets are also highly sought after during festivals. Consumption of sweets such as halwa, laddoo, barfi, and others increases, along with a rise in demand for fruits and flowers.

Decorative items like diyas, torans, rangoli materials, and lighting are also in demand for decorating homes and pooja pandals.

Tent houses and decoration companies are expected to see a surge in business due to the large-scale fairs and festival-related events being organized across the country, attracting millions of participants. *—ANI*

OpenAI raises $6.6B in funding, is valued at $157B

SAN FRANCISCO, 3 OCT

OpenAI has raised $6.6bn in a funding round that values the artificial intelligence business at $157bn, with chipmaker Nvidia and Japanese group SoftBank among its investors.

The San Francisco-based startup, responsible for the ChatGPT chatbot, did not give details of a reported restructuring that will transform it into a for-profit business. The funding round was led by Thrive Capital, a US venture capital fund, and other backers include MGX, an Abu Dhabi-backed investment firm.

OpenAI's post-fundraising valuation puts it on a par with Uber, although it remains far below the $3tn level of its biggest backer of recent years, Microsoft, which also joined the fundraising.

Other investors included Nvidia, a dominant player in the market for the chips that train and operate AI models, and Softbank, which counts the UK chip designer Arm among its investments.

Sarah Friar, OpenAI's chief financial officer, highlighted ChatGPT's popularity, with more than 250 million weekly active users.

OpenAI, which is reportedly heading for a loss of $5bn this year, said the fundraising would allow it to "double down" on cutting-edge AI research and increase its "compute capacity" – one of the main cost factors in building and operating powerful AI models.

OpenAI is run by a non-profit board but has a for-profit subsidiary, in which Microsoft is the biggest backer, with returns to investors and employees capped. Sam Altman, OpenAI's chief executive, could also receive a stake in the restructured company, according to reports. *—PTI*

PHOTO: NRAI

Khushi seals bronze, takes India's tally to 15

LIMA, 3 OCT

Khushi secured a hard-fought bronze in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions at the ISSF Junior World Championship here, dramatically qualifying for the final before rallying to claim the third spot. Her medal on Wednesday took India's tally to 15, including 10 gold, one silver, and four bronze medals, keeping the country at the top of the standings. The youngster shot 447.3 in the final to finish behind Caroline Lund of Norway who won silver with 458.3. Caroline's compatriot Synnoeve Berg won gold with 458.4. However, Khushi's path to the podium was far from easy. She narrowly made it to the medal round, rallying brilliantly in the final standing position in qualifying to clinch the seventh spot with a score of 585.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Hall of Famer Susie Maxwell Bernie dies at 83

PALM SPRINGS, 3 OCT

Susie Maxwell Berning, the three-time US Women's Open winner who was a pioneer as a mother while competing on the LPGA Tour, died after a two-year battle with lung cancer. She was 83. The LPGA said Berning, inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2022, died at her home in Palm Springs. "We are saddened by the passing of one of our greats," LPGA Tour Commissioner Mollie Marcoux Samaan said in a statement. "Susie Maxwell Berning was not just a fantastic player and a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame, but also a wonderful ambassador for the LPGA and women's sports overall. "We will always point to her as a role model for balancing home life and career, winning major championships while also raising a family. Susie was a strong, pioneering athlete who I have personally admired and whose legacy will continue to inspire future generations of athletes."—*PTI*

Krishnav Chopraa tied for 12th at AAC golf

GOTEMBA, 3 OCT

Krishna Nikhil Chopraa, son of former India cricketer Nikhil Chopra, played a steady opening round of 2-under 68 to be placed at a creditable tied 12th on a day of unpredictable winds at the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championships here. It was Chopraa's best round at the AAC and he now lies three shots behind the leader, Randy Bintang of Indonesia (65). Among other Indians, Vedant Sirohi (69) was tied for 16th and Kartik Singh had a roller-coaster 71 with a bogey-bogey finish to be tied for 31st. —*PTI*

Akhtar's red card downgrades to yellow: AIFF

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

The All India Football Federation's disciplinary committee on Wednesday upheld a wrongful dismissal claim by NorthEast United FC on behalf of defender Asheer Akhtar. By the decision, the committee has rescinded the red card shown to Akhtar, and downgraded it to a caution (yellow card) "for reckless play nature as suggested concerning the technical report". Akhtar was sent off in NorthEast United FC's Indian Super League match against Kerala Blasters at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium in Guwahati on Sunday. —*PTI*

Hard to beat Australia and SL: Harbhajan

India to open their campaign against New Zealand today, aiming to dethrone Aussies

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

India's World Cup-winning spinner Harbhajan Singh said the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side will face a tough challenge from Australia and Sri Lanka in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup.

The global showpiece gets underway in the UAE on Thursday, and India is placed in Group A alongside Australia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and New Zealand.

"I think India needs to be very careful when playing against Australia. Looking at this group, India has Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. But one match that I think will be a little tough is the India-Australia match," Harbhajan told Star Sports.

"Australia is a good team, even though these matches are being played in Dubai, on subcontinent pitches that might not suit them as much as their home conditions. But Australia, no matter where they play, is hard to beat. So, the biggest challenge for India may be Australia," he said.

India to Kick-off their campaign against New Zealand today PHOTO: PTI

Harbhajan's fears were not entirely misplaced as Australia has beaten India 23 times in 32 T20Is with the 'Women in Blue' winning seven of them.

However, the 44-year-old warned India of another potential hazard on its way to Sri Lanka.

But Harbhajan had little doubts that India had the skill sets to land their maiden ICC title.

"Team India will be the team to beat in this tournament. They have both experience and youth. Harman (captain Harmanpreet Kaur) is in good form, Smriti (Mandhana) is in good form, and Deepti (Sharma) is an unbelievable spinner.

"They are a very capable team and have been playing very good cricket. The unit looks solid. If India plays good cricket overall, I believe they will win this tournament," he noted.

India open their campaign against New Zealand on Friday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has introduced a social media moderation tool at the Women's T20 World Cup to "protect the cricket community from toxic content" and create a safer and more inclusive online environment for players and fans.

The tournament gets underway in Sharjah on Thursday with the final slated in Dubai on 20 October.

This AI-powered tool, in collaboration with GoBubble, monitors toxic content like hate speech and harassment across official and player social media channels, aiming to protect mental health and foster a positive atmosphere.

ICC head of digital, Finn Bradshaw said: "We are dedicated to fostering a positive and inclusive environment for all participants and fans of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup, it's been great to see so many of the players and teams embrace our new initiative.

—*PTI*

TODAY'S MATCH

- South Africa vs WI
  Time: 3.30 pm
- India vs New Zealand
  Time: 7.30 pm

Bangladesh beat Scotland by 16 runs in opener

SHARJAH, 3 OCT

The opening match of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 saw Bangladesh take all the points as they beat Scotland by 16 runs at the Sharjah Cricket Ground on October 3.

A brilliant bowling display by the Bangladesh contingent saw them bag their first points in the table.

Deciding to bat first on a hot and humid day, Bangladesh openers didn't get a good start, losing Murshida Khatun for just 12 runs within the powerplay.

In reply, Bangladesh looked determined to defend their total as they picked up the early wicket of opener Saskia Horley, courtesy of a deceiving spin delivery by Fahima Khatun in the 3rd over. —*PTI*

Paula Badosa PHOTO: @CHINAOPEN

Badosa ends Zhang's resurgence at CO

BEIJING, 3 OCT

Zhang Shuai's drought-busting week came to a shuddering halt as Paula Badosa continued her resurgence in a 6-1, 7-6 (4) victory to make the China Open semi-finals on Thursday.

The 19th-ranked Spaniard has won 28 of her last 35 matches dating to May and made the semi-finals of three of her past five tournaments. There was also a run to the US Open quarter-finals last month.

But, the story of the week has been the 35-year-old Zhang, who entered the China Open on a 24-match losing streak the second longest in the Open era, and ranked No. 595. She didn't drop a set in four matches this week.

The Chinese wild card had no answer, though, to Badosa's fast start as the Spaniard made three service breaks to comfortably claim the opening set. It was much closer in the second set as Badosa found herself down 3-1. —*PTI*

Usha calls SGM to address CEO appointment

NEW DELHI, 3 OCT

Embattled Indian Olympic Association President P T Usha has called a Special General Meeting of the body on 25 October to address contentious issues, including the appointment of CEO Raghuram Iyer, complaints of corruption against treasurer Sahdev Yadav, and the alleged ineligibility of some Executive Council members to hold office.

Usha has been at loggerheads with a majority of EC members on all these issues. Iyer's appointment is the most talked about issue as it is being aggressively resisted by EC members on account of his pay package and suitability for the job."

All these issues are extraordinary and emergent and require the participation of the House so that an effective decision is taken...In this regard I am convening a Special General Meeting of the IOA to be held on 25th October 2024 at the IOA Bhawan at 11 AM," the sprint great wrote in an email to office-bearers and other stakeholders."The SGM shall be a hybrid meeting as per Article 8.3 of the Constitution of the IOA. Those who are unable to join the meeting physically can join the meeting through Webex for which the online link would be available on the website of the IOA," she added. The call for this meeting comes after Usha had another heated confrontation with the EC on September 26 after a majority of its members reiterated their opposition to Iyer's appointment as CEO, the formal ratification of which is still pending. —*PTI*

PT Usha PHOTO: PTI

IRANI CUP

Easwaran compiles another timely 100

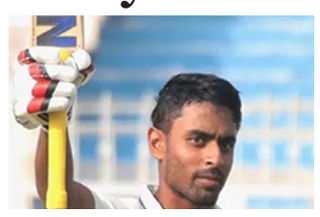
LUCKNOW, 3 OCT

In-form opener Abhimanyu Easwaran sent a timely reminder to the national selectors with his third successive hundred while holding the Rest of India's innings together after Mumbai posted a mammoth first-innings score of 537 in the Irani Cup here on Thursday.

Easwaran compiled an unbeaten 151 off 212 balls and laced his innings with 12 fours and a six on the third day of the match at the Ekana Cricket Stadium.

Thanks to Easwaran's second Irani Cup hundred, RoI reached 289 for four in their first innings and reduced the deficit to 248 runs by stumps.

The 29-year-old Bengal cricketer finds himself in a three-way race with RoI teammates Ruturaj Gaikwad and Sai Sudharsan to book the slot in what could be a jumbo squad as India's reserve Test opener for the upcoming long tour of Australia, reached his century in 117 balls with a boundary off Mohit Avasthi.



Abhimanyu Easwaran PHOTO: PTI

Sudharsan got a start but could not capitalize on it, getting dismissed after making 32 in 79 balls with the help of nine boundaries.

Devdutt Padikkal, too, failed to make a contribution of note and was sent back by pacer Mohit Avasthi for a 31-ball 16.

Ishan Kishan, the next man in, also missed out on a great chance to impress the people who matter.

Brief Scores: Mumbai 1st Innings 537 all out in 141 overs (Sarfaraz Khan 222 not out, Ajinkya Rahane 97, Mukesh Kumar 5/110, Yash Dayal 2/89, Prasidh Krishna 2/102) vs Rest of India 1st innings 289/4 in 74 overs (Abhimanyu Easwaran 151 batting; Mohit Avasthi 2/66). —*PTI*

Diksha Dagar PHOTO: PTI

Diksha returns to action in China to prepare for home

SHENZHEN, 3 OCT

Diksha Dagar will return to action on Friday after a two-week gap to compete in the Aramco Team Series Shenzhen, which she feels will help rejuvenate her for the home event, the Hero Women's Indian Open later this month.

After the KPMG Irish Ladies Open, Diksha skipped the La Sella Open and the Open de France and will now be captaining a four-member team, which also includes Moa Folke of Sweden and two Chinese players Xinyu Cao and Shaoyun Ding here.

The Shenzhen event has a 36-hole team competition for the first two days, and there is also a 54-hole individual stroke-play competition. Diksha is the only Indian in action this week. —*PTI*

Weight management is athlete's responsibility: Kom

MUMBAI, 3 OCT

No stranger to the physical toll of weight management during a competition, six-time world champion boxer M C Mary Kom Thursday waded into the debate surrounding wrestler Vinesh Phogat's Olympic heartbreak for being 100gm over, saying that to be within the prescribed limit is an individual responsibility.

The 42-year-old mother of four, who is India's only woman boxer with an Olympic medal (a bronze in London, 2012), was in the city to promote Utkarsh Small Finance Bank, which named her as its brand ambassador.

Speaking for the first time on Phogat, who was disqualified on the day of her 50kg finals in the Paris Games for being marginally over the prescribed limit, Mary Kom said weight management is an athlete's responsibility.

Mary Kom PHOTO: PTI

"I felt so disappointed in the sense that I have also done the same (weight management) for the last so many years. Weight is important, that is my responsibility. I cannot blame anyone," she said.

—*PTI*

National Motorcycle Racing C'ship set for grand climax

CHENNAI, 3 OCT

The Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship culminates this weekend with the fifth and final round here, as 100 entrants representing 19 sides will battle it out across 19 races.

The three-day event that gets underway on Friday will see races across five categories - Pro-Stock 301-400cc Open, Pro-Stock 165cc Open, Novice (Stock 165cc), Girls (Stock 165cc), and Stock 301-400cc Novice, while a maximum of 52 points will be offered.

The same will be the case in the Honda India Talent Cup and the TVS India One-Make Championship, attracting some hand-picked talented riders.

PHOTO: MOTORSPORT

The 2024 season witnessed a standard start in June. It will be long remembered for the emergence of a new generation of talented and fearless riders.

Pune's Sarthak Chavan, who turns 18 at the end of this month, has attracted much attention, along with 17-year-old Chiranth Vishwanath from Bengaluru.

The duo was recruited by the TVS Racing team last season, and since then, their performance graph has been northwards. Sarthak has won seven of the eight races so far and needs only a handful of points in the final round to clinch the title in the Pro-Stock 301-400cc Open class. —*PTI*

IT'S MESSI'S 46TH TROPHY

Inter Miami win MLS Cup with 3-2

COLUMBUS, 3 OCT

Lionel Messi and Inter Miami have another trophy, along with home-field advantage throughout the Major League Soccer playoffs.

Messi scored twice in the final minutes of the first half, goalie Drake Callender stopped a penalty kick in the 84th minute and Inter Miami beat the defending MLS Cup champion Columbus Crew 3-2 on Wednesday, wrapping up the Supporters Shield given annually to the team with the best regular-season record.

It was Messi's 46th major trophy won for club or country, extending his record for the most by any men's soccer player in history. It is the second he has won with Inter Miami, this Supporters Shield being added to the Leagues Cup trophy the Herons claimed shortly after Messi joined the club in 2023.

"We knew this was a group that could fight for this," Messi said.Luis Suarez also scored for Inter Miami, which will open a best-of-three first-round playoff series in the final weekend of October. If the team wins that series, it would have the right to host every match it plays the rest of the season an Eastern Conference semifinal (scheduled for Nov. 23 or 24), the East final (Nov. 30 or Dec. 1), and the MLS Cup final on Dec. 7.

Lionel Messi celebrates his second goal PHOTO: X / @INTERMIAMICF

"We have a nice opportunity to go down in history and now we think about what is coming," Messi told Apple TV after the match. "We have a great advantage in that we play all the games at home, which was what we were looking for. I think that we are very, very strong at home."

Also still within reach for Inter Miami: the best MLS regular-season mark ever. Wednesday's win pushed Inter Miami's record to 20-4-8 this season, giving it 68 points. If the club wins its final two matches Saturday at Toronto and Oct. 19 at home against New England it would finish with 74 points.

New England has the single-season points record, finishing with 73 in 2021.

Messi opened the scoring in the 45th minute, taking a long pass from Jordi Alba his longtime teammate at Barcelona, the club with which Messi won 35 of his trophies, and splitting two defenders before somehow getting the ball past Columbus goalkeeper Patrick Schulte for a 1-0 lead.

And about five minutes into first-half stoppage time, Messi struck again on a free kick from about 30 yards out. Schulte seemed fooled, and Messi squeezed the ball between the goalie and the near post for a 2-0 lead.

"Dominant," Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino said.Diego Rossi scored in the first minute of the second half for Columbus to cut the lead in half, but it didn't take long for Inter Miami to restore the two-goal cushion. —*PTI*

Mbappe can't rescue Real Madrid in CL

MADRID, 3 OCT

Kylian Mbappe came off the bench but couldn't prevent defending champion Real Madrid from losing 1-0 at unheralded Lille in the revamped Champions League.

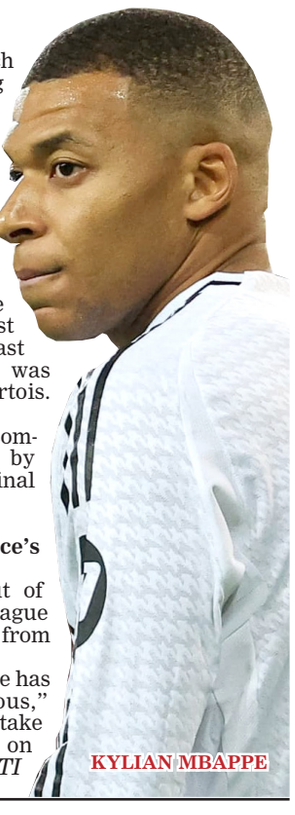
With Mbappe a substitute after a minor hamstring injury, the opening goal came from Canada striker Jonathan David's penalty deep into first-half stoppage time. A video review ruled that midfielder Eduardo Camavinga handled the ball. David scored a hat trick last weekend and shot confidently past goalkeeper Andriy Lunin, who was replacing the injured Thibaut Courtois. Mbappe came on in the 57th.

It was Madrid's first loss in the competition since a 4-0 hammering by Manchester City in the 2023 semifinal return leg.

Injured Mbappé left out of France's squad for Nations League games

Kylian Mbappé has been left out of France's squad for Nations League games as he continues his recovery from a minor hamstring injury.

"I discussed things with Kylian. He has a problem which isn't serious," Deschamps said. "I'm not here to take risks, which is why Kylian is not on the list." —*PTI*



KYLIAN MBAPPE